



LIGUORIAN

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THE TRUTH ABOUT SANTA CLAUS

WHAT IS MEEKNESS?

VIRTUES FOR CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS AND
UNCHRISTIAN CATHOLICS

SAINTS FOR THE MARRIED



THE Liguorian

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THE LIGUORIAN

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Virtues for Christmas

DONALD F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

THE most important part of the celebration of Christmas is its interior celebration, that is, the manner in which a person reacts to it in the innermost depths of his soul. All the external signs of celebration — giving gifts, greeting friends, joining in family parties, dressing up in new clothes — all this should be but an overflow of the personal, spiritual activity that is taking place in one's soul.

For those who have the gift of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, born into the world on the first Christmas as the Redeemer and Teacher of all mankind, the spiritual celebration of Christmas may well take the form of meditation and self-examination on five key virtues. These five virtues were especially manifest or dramatically taught by Christ in the manner of His coming into the world. At the same time they represent what is most needed in the character of every individual who wants to attain the happiness that Christ came to give to all. Indeed, if any one of these five virtues is lacking in a Christian, it is doubt-

All virtues must be practiced by Christians. Yet a few are basic to all the others, and these few are especially manifested by Christ in the manner of His coming into the world. See whether your soul is ready for Christmas.

ful that he will ever reach happiness at all.

Five virtues are picked out of the many that might be named because these five are basic to all the rest, and especially needed by most people today. There is an axiom in philosophy that no one can perfectly practice even one single virtue, without at the same time practicing all the other virtues. However, it is not easy to grasp how one virtue ramifies into all the rest. The human mind needs to see its human obligations broken down into parts. A textbook on ethics or on the virtues breaks them down into many parts. Here, inspired by the drama of Christ's coming into the world, and the spe-

cial needs of Christians in the world today, we break them down into five parts.

Within the quiet and solitude of your own soul, then, shut off from the world around you, do you who read these lines, reflect on what Christ wants you to learn especially from Christmas, and then examine yourself as to whether you have as yet learned it as well as you should.

I. Gratitude

CHRISTMAS is above all days the day of gratitude to God. On that day God gives Himself to all human beings, as the last and greatest of all the gifts He has given to them. Without a deep, personal, active sense of gratitude to God on Christmas, no celebration of the day can be worthwhile. Christ Himself set the example when He inspired the angels to express His own gratitude in the song: "Glory to God in the highest."

Gratitude is the preventive of pride and the foundation of humility; it is the highest refinement of justice and it is a stepping stone to love. The whole of one's spiritual life may well begin with gratitude to God.

At Christmas one is reminded to build into his character, first, gratitude to God for His supreme, His greatest, His everlasting gifts, and then for all lesser gifts, down even to the last moment of time that has been granted by His love.

The supreme gifts are represented by the Christchild. He represents heaven to all who believe in Him,

that indestructible paradise of never-ending and infinitely varied delights whose gates would be opened by Him to all. He represents the means through which a man can be transformed from a creature and a sinner into an adopted child of God, with the claim of his adoption by God through grace to the beatific vision. He represents the happiness of which all men dream, toward which they inevitably aspire, without which they can never be content. Christmas calls for an outpouring of gratitude for these magnificent gifts held out to all men in the hands of a little baby who is God.

Intensifying this gratitude (which, indeed can never be great enough) will be the thought of all the lesser gifts that have been given by God: the gift of life itself, of a mind and will, of eyes and ears and arms and legs and a hundred other powers and parts and organs that make up a human being; the gift of parents and relatives and friends; the gift of material goods (in small measure or great); the gift of knowledge of God and faith in Him; the gift of conquest over past temptations and forgiveness of sins to which temptations led.

All through Advent, in preparing for Christmas, every Christian should build up a glowing spirit of gratitude to God. Each one should ask himself daily, and more than once each day:

Am I grateful to God?

Am I grateful for heaven, for redemption, for sanctifying grace and

adoption by God, all of which Christ brought to me at His birth?

Am I grateful for life, for my soul and body, for my many faculties and powers, for my home and family, for my possessions, for the years that have already been given to me?

Am I expressing my gratitude each day, in words that glorify God, in actions that please Him?

II. Detachment

GRATITUDE to God, awakened or deepened on the feast of Christmas, spontaneously leads to the virtue of detachment from what are called "the good things of this world." It does so for two reasons.

First, because the primary object of one's gratitude to God is the eternal destiny of happiness He made attainable by His coming into the world. One who gratefully fixes his eyes on that eternal destiny in another world quickly comes to realize that he must not let the desire or possession or use of any good thing in this world interfere with his attainment of heaven. In a word, he must be detached enough from all the pleasures of this world to give any of them up rather than permit it to become a barrier to his happiness in heaven.

Second, gratitude leads to detachment because Christ set so dramatic and unmistakable an example of this virtue by the manner of His coming into the world. He was the maker and owner of all the good things on earth, yet when He was born on earth, He chose the poorest of all

the things it had to offer to supply for His needs and His use. A stable instead of a house for His birth; a manger instead of a bed for His sleep; swaddling clothes instead of silk garments for His clothing; the precarious income of an odd-job carpenter as the sole means of his support. He owned everything in the world; He used only the poorest things.

He does not ask that detachment in the lives of His followers go to the extremes that His went. They may be born in nice homes, and sleep in beds and seek a regular income and save up something for their future. He does ask, through His extreme example, that detachment mean something very definite to every Christian: that no follower of His will ever look upon the good things of this world as an end or a goal, but that everyone will see in them only a means to the end that is heaven; that no one will ever permit the desire or possession of material things to turn him away from his quest of heaven.

Detachment prevents a man from becoming a miser, counting his wealth over and over, making it his goal to hold fast to all that he has and to increase it, dying still clutching his bank book, his securities, his cash, and the empty honor of having been a rich man.

Detachment prevents a man from committing a single mortal sin, or even a deliberate venial sin, for the sake of material gain. The detached man never steals, or cheats his neigh-

bors, or says that it is too costly to observe any law of God.

Detachment is not a popular virtue among Americans. Among them it is honorable to love money, to seek riches, to make better and better investments, never to touch one's capital even though it run into hundreds of thousands of dollars, to want the best of everything, to try to make one's surroundings look as much like paradise as possible.

The Christchild in His stable rebukes all this. He seems to say: "If all that you cherish so dearly were really worthwhile, do you not think I would have taken more of it for myself?" He inspires every Christian to say to himself often throughout Advent and on Christmas day:

Am I detached from the world in which I live?

Am I detached enough to sacrifice anything I possess rather than lose heaven?

Am I detached enough to be called foolish by those who cling to this world as their only hope?

III. Resignation

GRATITUDE and detachment cannot mark the character of any Christian without producing the virtue of resignation to the unavoidable sorrows of this world. Again for two reasons.

First, because the grateful and detached person realizes that he will never have everything he wants in this world. He realistically faces the fact that he will have to endure many sufferings that he would like to avoid. He knows that there is no es-

cape from sickness, old age and death. Despite his earnest efforts to prevent them, he knows that in his own lifetime there may be depressions, catastrophes and wars. He is aware that there will be difficulties connected with raising his family in accordance with God's laws, and sorrows inflicted upon him through the sins and slights of his fellow men.

Not one of these things need ever be an obstacle to his reaching heaven. He is resigned in the midst of every sorrow and misfortune because he never did count on this world to give him perfect happiness.

Second, resignation to sorrow was the twin-brother of detachment in the life of the Saviour who came on Christmas. Again, He had to be resigned to far more suffering than the ordinary Christian will ever be asked to bear. He had to be resigned to His stable; to the exile in Egypt; to the poor home at Nazareth; to the hard and lonely years of His public life; to betrayal and unjust condemnation and the scourging and crowning with thorns and the cross. He was resigned to all these things; He never complained; He said it was meet that He suffer in order to enter His glory.

Can any Christian, then, remain unresigned to the sorrows of his life on Christmas day? The virtue of resignation means seeing in every sorrow the will of God, the wise will, the loving will, the all-powerful will of God. It means cheerfully carrying the little crosses, in the footsteps

of Him who carried the biggest one ever laid on human shoulders. It means never saying with bitterness and rebellion: "Why must I suffer? Why are not my prayers answered? Why should I love God who does all this to me?"

Throughout Advent and on Christmas day the true followers of Christ will be asking these questions of themselves:

Am I resigned to the sufferings I must endure, as I am grateful for all the good things God gave me?

Do I prove my detachment from the world by not complaining over my lack of pleasures that others seem to enjoy?

IV. Hope

GRATITUDE, detachment and resignation are the foundation-stones of a true and lively hope. Hope is the virtue by which one firmly expects that, through the merits and promises of Christ, heaven and perfect happiness will surely be attained. It is also the virtue by which one expects that through the merits of Christ, every grace and every help necessary for the attainment of heaven will be obtained.

What do we really want from Christmas? The miraculous healing of all our diseases? A sudden grant of wealth? A reversal of the years so that we shall no longer be middle-aged or old, but young once more? The removal of all our temptations, and perhaps even the repeal of some law of God that we have found difficult to obey? Do we want only a series of holidays, marked by free-

dom from work and even possibly a relaxing of our guard against sin?

Christmas is not for any of these things. Christmas was given to the world by God to awaken hope of a future rapturous life; to make men dream of heaven, and then set about the practical task of making the dream come true. The practical task involves two things: 1) looking to Jesus Christ for redemption, grace, enlightenment, divine aid; 2) doing the things Christ commanded even at the expense of life itself if necessary. Ask yourself throughout Advent and on Christmas day if that is what Christmas means to you.

Will this Christmas restore, enliven, intensify my hope of heaven?

Will it draw me more closely to Christ, in the Mass, in frequent Holy Communion, in daily prayer, throughout the coming year?

Will it make me unshakably confident that I can do everything that Christ commands me to do for the sake of winning heaven?

V. Love

IT HAS been said here that the practice of any one virtue in its perfection involves the practice of all other virtues as well. But there is one virtue in which the inter-relation of all other virtues is especially obvious, and that is the virtue of the love of God. The love of God can easily be seen to represent the total fulfillment of the law of God.

It will only be seen as such when it is rightly understood. And the Son of God came into the world on Christmas day to bring an under-

standing of the obligation of loving God to all mankind.

First of all, He appealed to their senses, their feelings, their emotions, by taking the form of a little baby. Except by the abnormal and the perverted, babies are instinctively loved. The perfection of their miniature bodies, their helplessness and dependence, their need of love, evokes the love of all. The Son of God became a baby to win such love.

But love never ends in the emotions, nor is it really love if it resides only there. Love is essentially a habit of the will, inspired by the intellect's understanding of the reasons for and the duties of love. Faith teaches the Christian that the Child born of Mary on Christmas night is God — God the Creator, God the Lawgiver, God the source of all man's happiness, God the Redeemer, God the final Judge of all. He deserves all the love of which man is capable, and that love must take the essential form of obedience and conformity to the will of God.

Therefore the very opposite of the love of God is sin. One act that is contrary to a serious law of Christ makes one guilty of hating Christ, and undeserving of all the good things He came into the world to give to men.

How impossible then, to celebrate Christmas rightly with one mortal sin in one's soul, or with the intention of ever committing another mortal sin! How preposterous to speak of loving the Christchild while one's

actions, or one's unforgiven mortal sins cry out to heaven one's hatred of Christ!

THESE are the most important questions every Christian should be asking of himself during Advent and on Christmas day:

Have I hated Christ in the past by the mortal sins that nailed Him to the cross on which He came to die?

Do I hate Him now by the unwillingness to give up my mortal sins and the occasions that lead to them?

Must I not begin to love Him now by making a good confession, with true sorrow for all my sins?

Must I not love Him enough to be willing to suffer anything, even death, rather than offend Him by another mortal sin?

MERRY CHRISTMAS To Any Wealthy Person

*May He Who owns all things that are,
Who lends them for a little while
To such as you whose share is far,
Far greater than the rank and file*

*Receive, remind you that your right
Is not without a duty taught
By Him Who stripped Himself this
night*

And thus for all men mercy bought.

*Have you served Him through what He
gave?*

*Have you remembered whence it
came?*

*Will you have nothing when the grave
Leaves you naught but your good
deeds' claim?*

— D. F. M.

THE LIGUORIAN

Feature Letter

What a Handicapped Child Can Do

Dear Fathers:

I have just finished reading your second article on retarded children and although it is midnight and I am weary from a long tiring day, I want to add my thoughts to the beautifully inspiring ones in your current article.

I am the mother of a severely handicapped child who is afflicted with cerebral palsy. She is completely helpless as well as speechless and without hearing. Her name is Mary Josephine, for she was born at Christmas time and we felt she could have no better patrons than Mary and Joseph in the difficult life ahead of her.

Like most parents of handicapped children, we were told early "to put her in an institution and forget her:" otherwise, we were assured, she would have a bad psychological effect on our other children. Dismayed by this crushing advice, I could only hold the helpless little one closer in my arms. A reply did not come easily, but finally I answered in the only way I knew. "We are Catholics," I told the doctor, "and our children are taught to believe that life is not perfect on this earth; that we all have crosses to carry. This baby will be our cross, but we will love her all

Almost every month we receive a few letters from readers which are excellent expressions of opinion, but too lengthy to be published in full in the limited space of the Readers Retort section and too worthwhile to be printed only in part. Whenever we judge such a letter worthy of publication we shall give special space to it in this department called **FEATURE LETTER**.

the more because of her helpless need of us."

That was eleven years ago; and God in His merciful goodness has never failed to give us the graces necessary to make this prediction come true. We truly consider little Mary-Jo a blessing in our home and always present her as our key to heaven! We are confident that the rest of us will win eternal happiness through her.

As your article made so clear, selfishness cannot exist too long in a family that has in its midst a handicapped child. Every member soon learns to give of himself, to share the common burden, so that the yoke does not weigh too heavily on any one individual. A solid family circle surrounding the cherished one is the end result of such cooperation.

Among my dearest memories will always be the examples of loving attention given to our Mary-Jo by her father and brothers and sisters. I can

never forget how she has brought out the good in our family. My dear husband has never been too tired in the early morning hours to put on her heavy full body control braces nor is he ever too weary at the end of a hard day lovingly to put her to bed for me. Our daughters have always been ready to feed her and help take care of her, even in the presence of their gay teen-age friends. My big college-boy sons have never been embarrassed by carrying her in such public places as city streets, beaches, etc., where the curious stares are many. My younger sons, while they were growing up, always included her in their play, although she could only be a happy onlooker.

For eight years she was our baby. Then, after losing several other little ones because of a complication similar to hers, God blessed us with a new son. For a while we worried that Mary-Jo would feel left out as we rejoiced over this new arrival. We wondered how little Johnny would react to this "big sister." However, we put these misgivings in God's hands, and our trust has been rewarded, for this ninth child loves Mary-Jo like the rest of us. He kisses her, "shoots" her, climbs over her, etc., while she radiates happiness at being part of his fun.

As your article pointed out, the first step to a normal, happy family life, where there is a handicapped child, is a definite, humble acceptance of God's will in this matter. From there on, life can be a matter-of-fact living of each day as it comes,

trusting to God that the bridges will be crossed when they are met. With such an attitude the parents can fit the handicapped one into the family circle, giving him all the loving security he needs, but without detracting from the needs of the other children.

With the help of society many more handicapped children could enjoy the blessings of family life. These children are not always sent to custodial institutions because their parents believe this is the best solution to their problems. Financial strain and the inability to provide necessary specialized care forces many reluctant parents to take such a course of action.

The establishment of local publicly supported facilities that would provide training and therapeutic care on a day basis would be the only helping hand that many families would need to keep their afflicted children at home. It is heartening to realize that great progress is being made in this direction. More and more is a public consciousness developing concerning the need of assisting handicapped children and their families who are trying so hard to carry a burden that at times becomes overwhelmingly difficult. God works in many ways to bring out the good in us. Thus, in this very materialistic age, His helpless little ones are in the forefront as agents for generating love of one's fellow man.

Thank you for the privilege of expressing myself on a subject so dear to my heart.

Sincerely,
Mrs. C. A. C.

THE LIGURIAN

In response to a number of requests, we publish
this short explanation of a much needed virtue.

What Is Meekness?

L. G. HYLAND, C. SS. R.

MEELINESS is a virtue that is sorely needed by the world today. It is absolutely necessary for the practice of fraternal charity. It is so important that Christ made it the first virtue we should try to imitate in Him: "Learn of Me, because I am *meek* and humble of heart." The following is a definition and description of meekness.

Meekness is the virtue that enables one to overcome anger, hatred, desire for revenge; that keeps one from being upset and irritable in the presence of the faults and weaknesses of others; that establishes an unshakable tranquillity and peace in the soul. Its essential feature is the overcoming of anger and hatred. The meek person has learned to be silent in anger and to realize quickly how foolish and sinful it could be to speak or act on the impulse of anger.

No matter how seriously he may be wronged by another, the meek person has at ready command all the natural and supernatural motives for forgiving and praying for the person who has wronged him.

The virtue of meekness keeps one from being upset and irritable in the presence of the sins and weaknesses of others. There are some people

grossly lacking in meekness, who are constantly wrought up and emotionally agitated over the presence of evil in the world. They fume and rage over the mistakes of politicians, the ignorance of their friends, and the morals of society. Meekness makes one realize that before God he is responsible only for himself and those dependent on him; it leaves the sins of others to the just and merciful judgment of God.

Meekness results in great tranquillity of soul. Wherever there is anxiety, tenseness, sensitiveness, intolerance, it is safe to say there is a lack of meekness. The meek are disturbed neither by the slights and injuries they themselves receive nor by the objective presence of wickedness in the world. They know their job — to try to be perfect and help others be perfect; for the rest, they hold themselves in peace and leave judgment to God.

Meekness is obviously one of the key virtues to lasting peace. Alas, however, it is a Christian virtue, and only in Christ can it be learned and practiced. That is why a reign of terror or violence in the world is almost always announced by a renunciation of both Christ and meekness.

Mathias Huber, C.S.S.R.

Little Lessons in Catholic Living Our Lady of Guadalupe

MORE than four hundred years ago, in the year 1531, a poor, hard-working Indian, named John Diego, was on his way to hear Mass in the city of Mexico. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him and told him to go to the bishop to bring him her command to build a temple on the spot where she was standing.

The Indian, John, went to the bishop and very simply gave him the message from our Blessed Mother. The bishop did not believe John and sent him away.

Again the Blessed Virgin appeared to John and repeated her command that a temple be built in her honor. Back to the bishop went John to bring the report of the new apparition. The bishop, still unwilling to believe the strange story, declared that John must bring him some sign from heaven to prove the truth of the whole affair.

Very soon after that second dismissal by the bishop, John set out again toward the city to call a priest for his uncle who was dying. Thinking that he might meet the Blessed Virgin again and be told to report to the bishop once more, he took another route toward the city. But the

Mother of God met him again and told him that his uncle had been cured through her intercession. And then she came back again to the same matter: to go to the bishop once more with her command to build a temple.

Then John grew bold enough to ask for a sign from heaven for which the bishop had asked. Mary told him to go over to the rocks nearby and gather roses.

Well! Roses from the rocks!

But John went to the rocks and there were the roses. He gathered a great number in his cloak, and our Lady arranged them for him and told him to keep them hidden until he came to the bishop.

When John opened the folds of his cloak before the bishop, the roses fell to the floor, and the bishop and his attendants dropped to their knees almost before the roses touched the floor; for as John held up the cloak before them to let the roses fall, they saw a resplendent picture of Holy Mary of Guadalupe, as she had called herself when speaking to John. Then John, also, looked at his cloak and saw the picture of the Virgin just as she had appeared to him.

Today Our Lady of Guadalupe is

the national patron of Mexico and her picture on the cloak of John Diego is still to be seen in the grand church that was built in answer to her command. The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated on December 12.

WHEN our Blessed Mother told John Diego to gather roses from the rocks in December, he obeyed at once — because he had a strong, childlike faith. As Catholics we have the same gift of faith that was given to John Diego, and if our Blessed Mother would appear to us and tell us to gather roses from the rocks, our desire surely would be to obey as quickly as he did. But we are not asked to gather roses from rocks. Instead of that we are asked to live our faith, day by day, in a manner that will prove it to be a real and childlike faith. It is good for us to ask ourselves: how do I show by my life that I appreciate all the wonderful gifts that my faith has given me?

See what you are asked to do. You believe that when you go to confession, your soul is cleansed from sin and that you receive strength to overcome temptation. Do you go to confession because you really believe that? Or just because it is time to go to confession again?

When you receive Holy Communion you believe that you receive God into your heart. But does your faith take you by the hand and lead you to the Communion rail as often as it should? And when you receive, do you WANT Holy Communion because you want God in your heart?

You believe in the power of pray-

er — and the need of it. But what does it look like when you pray? Can anyone tell from watching you pray what a wonderful thing you are doing and what a wonderful power is yours when you pray? Think of yourself praying. Your morning and evening prayers — meal prayers — your prayers in all your needs — your prayers in church. Do you really pray in a way that shows you mean it?

And at Holy Mass you believe that Christ is offering Himself for you upon the altar. But when you assist at Mass on Sunday are you present only because of the serious law of the Church that commands you to go to Mass on Sunday? Are you at Mass on Sunday only because it would be a mortal sin not to be there? How many of us could learn a lesson from the little girl who never used a prayer book or rosary when she was present at the sacrifice of the Mass! When she was asked what she did all during the Mass, she answered: "I look up at the big crucifix and see God upon the cross, and I say, 'It was me that did it!'"

FOR us—no roses from the rocks! For us the cares of life, our work at home or to gain our daily bread, the bad example of others, the call of forbidden pleasures — and all these always trying to come between God and us. But what can be easier than to gather a few roses from your rosary, on any day of the year and every day — a few roses for Mary, from you to her? And she will help you always more and more to live your faith.

Sometimes Catholics forget that they must also be Christians. Here are some examples to show how it is possible to be a Catholic in name without being a Christian in practice.

CHRISTMAS AND UNCHRISTIAN CATHOLICS

ERNEST F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

WHEN God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ on Christmas day nineteen hundred years ago, He brought with Him for the instruction and the salvation of the human race a set of rules and principles that were quite the opposite of the rules and the principles that guided the lives of the people of the world.

For example.

The world cries out that man should live only for the pleasures and the distractions and the ecstasies that the earth can give him. Christ cries out that man should seek first the kingdom of heaven, that man should not lay up treasures that the moth and the rust can consume but treasure for eternity.

The world cries out that man should avoid all pain, that the worst tragedy that can happen is that the

body should be attacked by disease and tortured by pain. Christ cries out that man must take up his cross and follow the bloody path that leads to the very summit of Calvary. Only thus can an eventual resurrection be assured.

The world cries out that love need follow nothing other than the demands and commands of the body, nothing more than the urgings and the whisperings of sex. Christ cries out that love follows a divine law that He Himself promulgated and that those who break that law are adulterers and fornicators and that they will not know the happiness of heaven.

Many Christian people proclaim themselves the followers of Christ. Yet, they have never acquired the spirit of Christ. In some things they follow the world. In other things they

follow Christ. They are half-world, half-Christ. Perhaps a description of such people might be helpful. Perhaps it will move unchristian Catholics to make an appropriate Christmas resolution.

What is a real Catholic?

Not one who cries out "Lord, Lord," and lets it go at that. Not one who walks up the middle aisle of his church and prays, "Thank God that I am not like the rest of men who are black and red and yellow, who are Mexicans and Jews and janitors. Thank God I am white, Christian, American and respectable; that I have my television in the house and my car in the garage and my two children, a boy and a girl, in an accepted school. Thank God that I am not like other men."

What, then, is a real Catholic?

This much is certain. It is possible for a person to be a Catholic in practice, and yet in spirit not to be a Catholic at all. In other words, it is possible to be a Catholic in name without being a Christian in deed. By this is meant — it is possible to go through the ordinary routine of Catholic life and still never acquire the true spirit of Catholicism or Christianity which is the spirit of the New Testament which in turn is the spirit of Christ.

THE spirit of Catholicism is a way of life — a special way of looking at things, of doing things, of shying away from things. It is Christ's way of thinking, of doing, of living.

It is quite definitely the opposite of the world's way of life — the world with its pleasures, its ambitions, its living for the day, its emphasis on the material. There can be no compromise with the world on the part of the true Catholic. The Catholic who makes a truce with the world is not a Catholic in spirit even though he follows with exactness the external practices of the Catholic religion.

An example will bring out the meaning of this distinction.

There is a very fine Catholic family in one of our large predominantly Catholic cities in the United States that typifies far more the spirit of the world in some of its convictions and inhibitions than it does the spirit of the faith. Yet, the family is most Catholic. If you were to say that it did not have the faith, each member in turn would be shocked beyond words. The very name of the family suggests the faith; it was always a Catholic name; please God, it always will be a Catholic name.

This family has a very close friend, a priest, who lives in a distant city. Whenever this priest comes through town, he makes it a point to call on his friends for an hour or two before continuing on his journey. On several occasions he could not help but notice the looseness of his friends' grasp on fundamental Christianity.

There was a time, not so long ago, when he was sitting in the swing, in the back yard of his friends' home, with the youngest and favorite son

of the family. This boy was nine or ten years old, well favored in talent and appearance, a server on the altar of his parish church, and possessing every promise of a fine and fruitful future if he was not spoiled in the process of his training and education. Yet, already he was acquiring wrong attitudes, unchristian attitudes.

The priest asked the lad if he ever went over to the nearby park to play, not only because there were always boys there of his own age but also because of the numerous facilities that were to be found in all parts of the park — swimming pool, baseball diamond, swings and crossbars, and so forth.

The boy answered that he was not allowed to visit the park. When questioned for the reason of this prohibition he responded that his mother and father would not let him go because the park was full of "niggers," and he was not supposed to have anything to do with "niggers." That was the precise term he used.

So, here is a boy, hardly old enough to know that there is much difference between a skin that is white and a skin that is black, being brought up by Christian, Catholic parents on the premise that certain people are only stepchildren of the human race solely *because their skin is black*, and that because they are only stepchildren, they should not be associated with as equals. If a boy is black, let the boy that is white have nothing to do with him. Pass him by, as so many fine *respectable* people in the Gospel story passed by the

poor man who fell amongst thieves and who was finally taken care of and had his wounds bound up by a despised and accursed Samaritan. Above all, don't play with a black boy in a park. And when it comes to swimming with a black boy, don't even think of it. So said the parents to their Christian son. And so said the boy to the priest.

It is doubtful that the parents of this boy realize how egregiously they are failing in fundamental Christianity, for charity surely is a part of fundamental Christianity. Christ preached universal charity a hundred times — "the second commandment is like unto the first, 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'" — and Christ showed the way of this charity by crying out for the forgiveness of the very ones who hung Him on the cross. Christ made no distinctions of color or race when He demanded of His followers a charity that would embrace all the members of the human race, and especially the forgotten and unfortunate members of the human race.

This fact probably never dawned on the minds of the parents in question while they practiced their faith with conscientiousness and devotion. If the priest had pointed out to them their failure, their first reaction would have been all the stock arguments and clichés of the racists. "We cannot tolerate the thought of our child marrying a nigger — niggers cannot be trusted; they rape and kill and fight every chance they get — we

have nothing against colored people as long as they keep their place — one has to look out for one's property; if we let the darkies come in, it will be the end of our property value, and, of course, we'll have to move out."

If the priest had had the courage to pursue his purpose of enlightening them and pointed out how contradictory their conduct was, how hypocritical and utterly unchristian, they probably would have taken stock of themselves and gradually come to an entirely different point of view. They possessed the faith; and the faith would win out in the end if the proper instruction was given. If the priest had only told them what an un-Christlike thing it was to use the opprobrious title "nigger," a start would have been made in the right direction.

The question is — what would Christ do if Christ lived in the city in which this fine Christian family lives, and if there was a park nearby His home in which colored people took their recreation? Would He tell all the little children of whom He had said a long time before, "Let the little children come to me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" — would He tell them to stay away from the park because there were "nigger children" there who in some strange way were contaminating the atmosphere above the park and who should be avoided at all costs unless there were a policeman close at hand in case protection were needed?

IS THAT the way Christ would act if Christ lived in a large city in the United States in the twentieth century? Of course not. The color of a man's skin meant nothing to Christ. He died for all men. He loved and loves all men. He expects as much of His followers who carry the name Christian. The spirit of the world may be discrimination, segregation, snobbery, superiority, white supremacy. But that is not the spirit of Christianity. And it is hypocrisy for a Christian to act as though it is.

This, then, is the first example of the family's mental confusion as to the vital issues of Christianity as Christ outlined these issues when He was on earth, and explained clearly the solutions of the problems that were bound up in the issues. It was not the last.

The most recent visit the priest paid to his friends was on a hot summer night. The family was out in the front yard of their home. This time the example centers around a young lady, eighteen or nineteen years old, the favorite daughter of the family. She is a fine girl, well thought of by her friends, nice-looking, at one time president or prefect of the sodality of our Lady at school. There is every argument in favor of her innocence and virtue.

Yet, when the priest came upon the family in the front yard of their home, he noticed that the virtuous young lady, according to the style current amongst the worldly-minded at the time, was wearing the briefest

of brief shorts, shorts that were hardly more than swimming trunks. One, not knowing her, could hardly believe that she was a girl who had on more than one occasion consecrated herself to and taken as a model the Blessed Virgin Mary. One would rather believe that she had taken as her model one of the more vulgar movie stars from Hollywood.

There are those who say that there is nothing wrong in a girl being comfortable on a hot summer day, that evil is in the mind rather than in the way a girl dresses. There is a chance that they may be right. There is a better chance that they are wrong. Again, it is an issue between the spirit of the world and the spirit of Catholicity or Christianity.

To Christians who have imbibed the spirit of Christ modesty is always a precious virtue and one not to be jeopardized by a copying of the methods of the world for the sake of "keeping cool," or "keeping up with the style," or for any other reason.

It is difficult to imagine the Blessed Virgin Mary so dressed, or St. Agnes or St. Agatha or St. Cecelia or a host of other beautiful women of the past who did not think that they had to enhance their beauty or prevent heat stroke by appearing in public half-dressed. They had learned from Christ that one of the most unexpendable planks in His platform was purity. They were determined to stand on Christ's platform, on every plank of Christ's platform, and never move over to the platform of the world.

Is it not strange that this young lady's parents did not tell their daughter to go into the house and get dressed before the priest-friend of the family came, and not wait until *after* he came; or rather, is it not strange that they had not explained to their daughter from her girlhood the meaning and the value of purity and modesty, and how this virtue invariably was a sign as to whether or not one had acquired the spirit of Christ?

Here again the priest might have made an impression if forthwith he had told the assembled family of the vulgarity and suggestiveness of the young lady's meagre attire, that it was unbecoming to say the least and that people with a feeling for modesty felt ill at ease in the presence of one who was dressed more fittingly for the bedroom than for a public street along which many people, old and young, traversed to and from their homes.

The trouble is, they might have thought that he was old-fashioned, puritanical, excessively rigorous. In the long run, however, they would have caught on. The faith would have won out. They would have looked upon this business of modern styles with other eyes than those of the world.

The third and final example of this family's neglect of the essential truths of Christianity is that which concerns the mother of the family.

This mother founded a fine family that is now adorned with grandchildren as well as with children. And not one of the children has married

outside the faith or brought disgrace upon the heads of the parents. It is a family to be proud of. She is a mother especially to be proud of.

Yet, this mother has the greatest difficulty in understanding why anybody has to suffer in this life. When a tragedy comes to one of the distant relatives, she asks over and over again why this must happen. She has never learned the lesson of pain and suffering. She has never grasped the significance of poverty (to be poor is one of the great calamities of life); she has never come to understand that out of sorrow can come good. This inability to fathom the meaning of the cross shows itself even in the remarks about those in her relationship who select the more difficult forms of the religious life. She persists in asking why they do not join a religious order where some good can be done for the world.

And so it goes in the whole family.

ONE wonders how widespread amongst Christians is this ignorance of basic Christian principles. But one does *not* wonder how it happens that some Christians are ignorant of these basic Christian principles. They are attached to the world. They have never given up the world. They do not know the end and purpose of life which is to know, to love and to serve God on earth in order to be happy with Him in heaven. They are blinded by the world. Until that blindness is cured, their adherence to Christianity will be only a surface adherence. It will not find its way into the depths of the soul.

NOT THE NAME BUT THE USE

"If religion can do all that you say it can," a young man asked his pastor one day, "how does it happen that there are thousands of people who call themselves Christians but who do all kinds of things they oughtn't to do?"

"That's very true," was the pastor's reply. "But water has been flowing for thousands of years, and many people are still dirty. Is it the fault of the water, or of the people who won't use it?"

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IN OUR HOUSE

In our house (as in most, I suspect) the children are greatly addicted to watching television. My husband and I have been somewhat concerned about this, but we weren't moved to take any action until the other day. That was when this happened: from upstairs, I called down to Jerry, our five-year-old, to tell me what time it was.

"The long hand is on Channel 5, mama, and the little hand is on Channel 2," he replied.

Catholic Digest

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LEADERSHIP

A good man likes a hard boss. He does not have to be a mean or nagging boss or a grouch. A good man likes a boss who insists on things being done right and on time; a boss who is watching things closely enough so that he knows a good job from a poor one. Nothing is more discouraging to a good man than a boss who is not on the job, and who does not know whether things are going well or badly.

RAVE NOTICE

UNLESS a Catholic book is atrociously bad, the Catholic reviewer will usually recommend it to the public for the simple reason that, whatever be the literary faults of the book, the reader would still benefit greatly by anything of a spiritual nature. There is nothing sneaky or underhand about this procedure; but it certainly must baffle the economy-minded Catholic who cannot afford to buy every recommended book. Presumably he would like to get, not simply a great deal, but the most for his money. This reviewer would like to help him solve this problem by selecting for him, out of the hundreds of good books that have appeared in the last two years, one book that is truly outstanding, a book that is worth every penny of the modest sale price.

"Love" was the simple but comprehensive title given the work by its author, Father Colin, a French Redemptorist. "Love the Lord Thy God" is the title given by its translator, the gifted and brilliant Donald Attwater. The Newman Press makes an admirable production of the book and asks \$3.50 for what is pure gold.

BERNARD F. McWILLIAMS, C.S.S.R.

What makes the book great? Certainly not simply the fact that it treats of the love of God. There are many books that have to do directly or indirectly with this supremely important subject. And any one of them could be read with great profit to the soul. But this book surpasses everything that has ever been written on the subject. Is Father Colin, then, the possessor of the keenest mind of the ages? Not so; but he has had the adroitness to weave throughout his text the finest fruits of the minds of the world's great God-lovers. To read this book is like listening to a group of fascinating men and women talking informally but passionately about their one great Love. If ever a monk needed justification for shutting himself off from the world and poring over old and treasured manuscripts, this book is it.

Not that the book is merely a compilation of quotations. Much of the book is written in Father Colin's own lucid and moving prose. But as he himself so humbly says: "This book

makes no claim to originality in either matter or manner. It is hardly more than a commentary on, and sometimes a paraphrase of, the pertinent writings of Thomas Aquinas and Alphonsus Liguori, Francis de Sales and John of the Cross. The writer is the humble follower of such masters; a popularizer of their thought, he aims simply at being a faithful echo of their teaching."

And so he is. The book is not deep in the sense of being difficult to understand. Laymen with no more than high school training have found it terrifically engrossing. Said one, "I wish I could have read something like this a long time ago."

Actually it is not surprising that a book like this should prove to be so appealing. After all, the deepest and most disquieting instinct we have is to love God. "There is," says the author, "nothing older than love of God and nothing more young. Like the springtime, it seems ever new: the human heart no more tires of loving than a bird of singing or a bee of gathering honey. In the life of the spirit, love has a unique place. It is the summing up of the Gospel, the essence of Christianity, center and topmost peak at the same time: center of religion and summit of holiness." Since this is true and since the love of God is the vocation of everyone, regardless of mental equipment, the subject does not have to be choked by a jungle-growth of words.

CHAPTER after chapter and step by step, Father Colin takes us into the warm and shimmering world

of love. Of course, the intensity of one's love for God depends primarily on God's grace. And it may never be given to us to love the way the saints have loved. But when the reader finishes the book, he can fathom, to some extent at least, the ecstasy, the almost unbearable joy of the saints. He can better understand why the saints were the happiest of mortals because he can now clearly see that love and joy are inseparable and that the saints knew the perfection of love.

To sum up: if there is anything that we should read about, it is love of God. We would be fools not to give prime consideration to our basic need. What, then, could be more profitable than to avail ourselves of the vast labor of research of Father Colin, so artfully organized, so engagingly woven into his wise and yet almost childlike treatise? This is a book to be read and re-read. It will be loaned out only to close and reliable friends. If the reader has but a vague hunger for God, he will treasure this book as a hungry and cashless man would a credit card. So be good to yourself over the holidays. Order the book through the nearest bookstore or directly from The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland.

A long time ago a monk, rhapsodizing over the beauty of divine love, said, "You will see a clear light shining softly upon everything." And in this darkening world, that is precisely what the reading of this book will do for you.

pre-marriage clinic

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

May Validation of a Marriage Be Delayed?

PROBLEM: A young Catholic friend of mine, a girl of 17, recently ran away with a non-Catholic boy and attempted marriage before a justice of the peace. The girl comes from an excellent Catholic family, the members of which are deeply grieved over what the girl has done. The boy was brought up with almost no religion, and hasn't much of a job. Everybody wonders how long this so-called marriage can possibly last. But this is the point that is being hotly disputed by the family and friends of the girl: should she be urged to influence the boy to go with her to a priest and have the bad marriage validated at once? Or is it lawful to let them go on living in sin without having the marriage fixed up in the Catholic Church on the grounds that it seems improbable that it will last very long? Is it lawful even to advise the girl not to have her bad marriage validated, so that she will not be irrevocably tied to this man? If the answer to these last two questions is yes, would not that attitude encourage young people to leap into these hasty and invalid marriages, with the thought that they can later escape if they wish?

SOLUTION: This presents a most delicate problem to human prudence, in which many principles are involved.

One principle is this: It is never lawful to encourage a person to continue to

live in sin. It would certainly be wrong to say to this young girl: "Just go on as you are, and don't have this bad marriage validated because it might not last." If the family and friends and even the pastor are fearful that the hasty attempted marriage will break up, they should, with the utmost kindness and zeal, urge the young girl to leave the man she is living with. Even in cases where there seems to be hope that the couple might make a go of marriage if they were validly and indissolubly married, the first advice of all who love her should be: "Leave this boy; stop living in sin; prove that you realize how wrongly you acted before you ask the Church for the privilege of a validation of your marriage."

A second principle involved is this: Sometimes we are not given a choice between good and evil as such, but only between two evils, one greater and one lesser. In this case, it is a terrible evil for a Catholic girl to live as if married when she is not really married at all. It is also a terrible evil to urge a Catholic girl to bind herself indissolubly to a sacramental Christian marriage when one foresees with strong probability that the marriage would not last, and would actually lead to adulteries and other attempted and invalid marriages. Sometimes the first is the lesser of the two evils. But note again: You never tell the girl that

she should continue in this evil. You try to get her to do what she knows she must do to return to the grace of God and the hope of heaven, namely, separate from her unlawful partner.

As to the danger that choosing the lesser of the two evils in a certain case may encourage other young Catholics to take a fling at invalid marriages, knowing that they won't be bound for life, it may be said that only the most callow, immature and poorly trained and instructed Catholics will be subject to that danger. A Catholic who uses the example of another immature Catholic as a reason for entering a bad marriage would probably not be saved from serious habits of sin even if there were no bad example before his eyes. And experience proves that those who so publicly renounce their

faith as to make a sacrilege out of marriage, pay for their sins in many sufferings through life.

One more thing. In all the above we have been concentrating on the kind of case in which there is a great weight of evidence against the future success of the partnership involved. In many other cases in which a Catholic runs off and attempts marriage, the person comes to his (or her) senses quickly; there are good grounds for believing that there are the makings of a good, lasting Christian marriage in the two people involved. In such a case they should be urged to go to their pastor as soon as possible, while at the same time they are also urged to give up living together as man and wife until they are truly married.

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Please notify us promptly of your change of address, giving both your old and new address. It makes it easy for our office if you cut your stenciled address from the rear cover of one of your issues of *THE LIGUORIAN* and send it in when asking for a change of address. Notify us by the tenth of the month if your copy for that month has not been delivered.

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THE LIGUORIAN
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The Truth about Santa Claus

*There is a Santa Claus,
and every child should be
taught exactly who he is.*

Daddy, I want to ask you a question.

Fire away, my son.

The kids at school are saying that there isn't any such person as Santa Claus.

Did you believe them, son?

Well, not exactly. I told them that I would ask you and that you would tell me.

Putting me right on the spot, eh?

You will tell me, won't you?

I surely will. First tell me, what do you really think about it?

You mean the part about the reindeer and coming down the chimney and filling stockings and all that?

Yes.

I don't believe much about *that* stuff.

But you do want to know whether there is anybody anywhere with a name like Santa Claus?

Yes.

The answer is yes. There is such a person.

Where is he?

He is in heaven. His real name is Saint Nicholas.

How did that become Santa Claus?

ST. Nicholas was a holy man who lived over 1600 years ago. He was made bishop of the city in which he lived, in a country you probably haven't heard about yet, then called Asia Minor.

What did he do?

He lived so long ago, long before any books were printed, that we don't know very much about him except that he was always giving things away, doing good to people, and especially helping children.

Then they changed his name to Santa Claus?

Not yet. For many years everybody just knew him as St. Nicholas. All over the Catholic world people prayed to him for things they needed.

Did they get what they prayed for?

Very often they did. He was a saint in heaven, and saints can always ask God to help people who pray to them.

But when did he become Santa Claus?

Many years later. Before that the Catholics of a little town called Bari in Italy went to the place where he was buried in Asia Minor and brought his body back to their own city.

Why did they do that?

Because Catholics always honor the bodies of saints. They feel that if they honor the saint's body, then he will be more apt to ask God to help them when they pray to his soul in heaven.

Was it in Italy that he became Santa Claus?

No, it wasn't. Everybody just knew St. Nicholas as one of the most charitable saints who had ever lived. When they thought of St. Nicholas, they thought of how much our Lord wanted everybody to be charitable and to give things to other people. He became the patron of giving things away.

You still haven't told me how he became Santa Claus.

It's a long story, my son, and I can't tell you in just a few words. Do you want to hear it all?

Yes.

Well, there's another step in the story I have to explain. Since St. Nicholas was the patron of giving things away, and since people always thought of giving things away on Christmas, when Jesus gave Himself to everybody, they gradually began to make St. Nicholas a kind of patron of Christmas.

How did they do that?

In many Catholic cities of Europe, they would have somebody dress up as if he were St. Nicholas on Christmas eve, and then go around giving presents especially to children.

But they knew it wasn't really St. Nicholas, didn't they?

They knew that there was a St. Nicholas, that he was in heaven, that he could help those who prayed to him.

But who changed his name to Santa Claus, and started the story about the reindeer and the sled and the sack of toys and all that?

Now I'll tell you. Many years later there were a lot of people who no longer believed in saints, and a lot of people who didn't even believe in Christmas as the day when our Saviour was born. Their children grew up without any real knowledge of Christmas, or any knowledge of saints and heaven.

Like people who never go to church at all?

That's right. Now these people still liked to celebrate Christmas, even though they did not know what it was all about, or did not believe in it.

How did they know about Christmas at all?

Oh, the nice part about Christmas — having parties, giving and receiving presents, singing and dancing — all that had just become a part of every year. People liked it and they hung on to it, even when they no longer knew the reason for celebrating.

Are we getting near to Santa Claus?

Pretty close. These people who no longer celebrated Christmas just because Jesus was born on that day, had to make up a story to tell their children about it. They made up the fairy tale of Santa Claus.

What is a fairy tale?

It is a story that is based on something that is true, but it turns the truth into something imaginary, something that people just make up.

What did they make up about Santa Claus?

Well, people never really forgot St. Nicholas, the great saint who gave so much away and who is in heaven, ready to ask God to help those who pray to him. But now a lot of them no longer believed in saints or in heaven or even in praying. So they changed St. Nicholas into Santa Claus. Santa really means "saint" and Claus is a contraction of Nicholas.

What else did they do?

They made up the story that Santa Claus has a big toy factory at the North Pole, where he spends the year making playthings for children.

And on Christmas he comes down from the North Pole on a sleigh with

reindeer pulling it, and he stops at every home and goes down the chimney and leaves toys and candy for the children.

That's right. You know all about the story that they made up for Christmas. But you told me you don't believe in that stuff, didn't you?

I don't.

But you can see, can't you, my son, that they were not so terribly far away from the truth they no longer knew about Christmas.

I think I see. There really was a St. Nicholas, from whom they got the idea of Santa Claus.

Yes. And there really is a heaven where St. Nicholas lives, not at the North Pole, but where God and all the angels and saints live.

I see.

And all the good things we ever get, from our parents or relatives or friends, at Christmas or at any other time, really come to us from heaven. The saints there help us to get good things from God, if we pray to them.

I see.

But notice one thing more. Most parents, even those who don't know anything about God or the saints or heaven, tell their children that if they are not good, Santa Claus won't bring them any presents. Where do they get that idea?

That's right in my catechism. It says that if we are not good, God and the saints can't answer our prayers till we are good.

Excellent. Now which is better, to believe in Santa Claus and the toy factory at the North Pole, and the

sleigh and the reindeers and all that, or to believe in the real heaven and the real saints and the real goodness of God?

I want to believe in the real things, not in the fairy tales.

And what is the real reason of our wrapping up presents at Christmas, and giving them to those we love, as your mother and I will have presents waiting for you under the Christmas tree on Christmas morning?

Because it's the day Jesus was born.

What did Jesus give us when He was born?

Oh, He was God, and God gives us everything we have.

That's right. But what did Jesus come to give us especially on Christmas?

He came to give us heaven, because we had lost it by committing sin.

What would He have to do to give us heaven?

He would have to die on a cross.

So He gave us His very life, didn't He? And what did He tell us, before He died, that we would have to do for others if we wanted to be saved by Him for heaven?

We would have to love them.

That's right. And loving others means giving them things, making sacrifices for them as our Lord sacrificed His whole life for us. Now do you see why we should give presents to each other at Christmas?

Of course, Daddy. It's because that's the day when Jesus gave us so

much. And He wants us to love other people as He loved us.

Right you are. What will you think of then, when you open your nice new presents on Christmas morning?

I'll think of Jesus coming to give us heaven.

And what will you think of when you give a present to someone else, as I will help you to give a present to your mother?

I'll think that I'm doing like Jesus did, giving something away because I love my mother.

And what will you say if somebody asks you, do you believe in Santa Claus?

I'll say that I believe in St. Nicholas, who is a saint in heaven, and who can help me to be generous like he was if I am good and if I pray to him.

What about the toy factory at the North Pole, and the sleigh and climbing down the chimneys?

Oh, that's just a fairy tale.

Do you think it is right to tell little children that fairy tale?

I think it would be better to tell the truth.

Why?

Because the children would know about Jesus being born on Christmas, and about good saints like St. Nicholas, and about heaven.

You are very wise, my son. . . . Now let's figure out what present we can get for your mother on Christmas.

Oh, good!

Let's see. . . .

? ? ? Readers Ask... ? ? ?

Too Much Mercy?

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

You are probably tired of hearing this type of question, but I cannot understand why Jimmy Walker, former mayor of New York, is praised so much in Catholic periodicals. His first wife was present at his funeral, and his second wife had died. And how about Merle Oberon, who after several previous marriages was married in church. It seems to me we would be better off if we were married by a justice of the peace and be smart like the movie stars.

OUR correspondent is right; we are tired of hearing this type of question. It distresses us because it reveals a lamentable lack of understanding of God's mercy, and a somewhat cynical readiness to believe that the Church plays favorites in settling marriage cases.

When you read of someone who was married before, has a spouse still living, and now marries in the Catholic church, you can be sure that for one of several possible reasons the Church has found the previous marriage (or marriages) invalid. Perhaps the Catholic party attempted marriage outside the Church, thus committing a grave sin of disobedience, and not being married at all in the eyes of the Church. Perhaps there was grave fear or force, which could from the start invalidate the marriage contract. The good Catholic, upon reading in the paper an item about some movie star's remarriage, will not immediately take scandal and cry out: "I just can't understand how the Church can permit such things!" Rath-

er, if asked for an opinion, he will reply: "Obviously, if the Church permitted it, there must have been good evidence on hand to prove that the previous marriage was invalid."

In regard to Jimmy Walker, we don't know of any Catholic periodicals which praised him for his wrongdoing, although they may have mentioned a thing not to be denied, that he had a good side along with the bad. Jimmy himself in his later years humbly and sincerely confessed that he had done wrong in leaving his first wife, a point which, we understand, the recent movie about him does not satisfactorily bring out.

In any case, surely it does not behoove a Catholic to feel, as it were, imposed upon when a sinner finds his way back to God's mercy. There was a very famous public sinner who died about the same time as Christ; he was, in fact fastened to a cross beside the cross of Christ. In the last moments of his life Christ publicly forgave him because he saw the thief was sincerely repentant. Can the Church founded by Christ do any less if one of her wandering children comes home at last and seeks the shelter of the family?

Everyone has to pay for his sins, of that our correspondent may be sure. But there are different ways of paying, and withal, one should not presume to set limits to the mercy of God. Those who try to do so might find themselves some day much in need of that same mercy.

This is the second of a series of four articles giving a summary of the answers to a questionnaire sent to parents of retarded children.

FOR PARENTS OF RETARDED CHILDREN

GERARD BREITENBECK, C.S.S.R.

"Who will roll back the stone for us?" asked the pious women as they hurried to our Lord's tomb on the first Easter Sunday morning. Today many parents of a retarded child ask the question: "Who will roll back the stone of ALONENESS for us and let the light of the experience of others shine into our lives?"

In the first article of this series we took up the question of the necessity of a popular literature and the availability of information on the question of retardation. In this and subsequent articles we wish to continue to bring together the different experiences, counsel, and help of those who have gone through this situation.

What will the members of our family, relatives, friends and others think and say?

Almost universally the answer to this question is that the vast majority of relatives, etc., were understanding.

Here are samples of the expressions that these various parents have used: "Our relatives never questioned our keeping our child at home." "Our parents, brothers and sisters have always been most kind to our child and visit her." "Both our families have accepted our retarded child the same as any other child in the family."

Of course there will be exceptions, just as there are exceptions to everything. One mother summarizes it very well when she writes: "Most neighbors and their children have been wonderful. Of course there have been some who have been intolerant. Having a retarded child at home is a great way to measure those you meet and know. The ones who understand are treasures; the ones who don't you pity."

In general, however, these parents say that their relatives and neighbors have been intelligent and kind, just as we would expect them to be in the face of any other physical sickness or infirmity.

Should the other children in the family be told of the retarded child's condition? If so, what should be told and when?

There is no doubt about the fact that other children in the family should be told. It is far better for them to hear the truth from their own mother and father than to find out about it from an outsider or a taunting playmate. A woman told me: "For seventeen years my mother tried to keep from me the true condition of my sister. We knew something was wrong, but we didn't know what. I wish my mother had told me so that I could have been more understanding of her."

When should these other children be told?

Just as the Holy Father advises parents to tell their children the facts of life when they begin to ask questions and according to the questions that they ask, so too, here the same principle should be followed. When children notice something wrong and ask what it is, they should be told the truth immediately. If the children do not ask what is wrong, it is best to wait until they are a little older.

How are children to be told?

Simply and briefly the parents should explain to the child that almighty God in His all-wise plan has kept a part of their little brother's or sister's intellect or mental powers in heaven. Just as He keeps a part of the body of some other little ones (eyes, hearing, hands, etc.) in heaven awaiting the day of the glorious resurrection of the body, so too, He has

done this for their little brother or sister.

This can be done very nicely in connection with a simple explanation of the doctrine of the glorious resurrection of the body. Tell the little child that he or she must be kind, considerate and helpful to the little brother or sister. They are to watch over him or her. Explain the role of the guardian angels and impress upon the normal and healthy little ones that they also are to be guardian angels but angels that can be seen, to their little handicapped brother or sister. In this way the other children will be given a truthful explanation and proper mode of action. All should be given a sense of responsibility and learn to recognize what the exceptional child is capable of doing and not doing. Thus all members of the family can make their own particular contribution to the guardianship and training of their retarded loved one.

Mrs. Gluck tells a most heartwarming account of an incident in her family: "My young son's fourth birthday was being celebrated. The birthday cake with the four candles aglow was carried proudly to the table by my seven-year-old son. The eleven-year-old carried his youngest brother to the place of honor, while the ten-year-old placed him carefully in his special seat. The happy four-year-old sat quietly listening to, but not understanding, the *Happy Birthday* song. He was not interested in eating the cake or ice cream, for despite his having ten teeth he could not chew. His three brothers ate his

share, and then turning to him, they each spoke a tribute to the occasion: 'We love you, little fellow, and we hope you will be with us for many years to come. We'll protect you and watch over you always.' As a mother, I fought back the tears. Quickly I hugged all three and said that they could go out to play. Silently, tearfully and gratefully I gave thanks for my three normal, healthy and intelligent children. With peace in my heart and a prayer of thankfulness to God on my lips I was happy my retarded son had that chance to show that he, too, performed a great purpose in life. Because of their retarded brother my other children were developing a remarkable sense of responsibility and deep love for the welfare of others."

Will we be able to have a normal family and will the children that follow also be afflicted?

No one can lay down hard and fast conclusions here. Just as a miscarriage can happen to a mother, whether young or old, just as children can be born blind and deaf, crippled of hand or foot, so children can be born retarded. Polio can strike, and the mind can be affected. It certainly does not follow that all children born after a retarded child will also be retarded. The following are actual cases.

"I was already forty when our Cathy was born, and due to a large tumor I never expected to be blessed with another child. Two and a half years later we had another perfectly normal daughter."

Lt. Col. and Mrs. Campbell observe: "Our son, Jack, who followed our retarded child, is a brilliant boy, a very rapid learner. It appears that God gave to him the ability that He did not give in this present life to our other little one."

ONE thing is certain: when God permits a hardship, God gives the grace to endure that trial, if we will cooperate with his grace. Almost every person in his lifetime meets a moment of decision. The outcome is the turning point in his life, either for better or for worse. It may be a choice of one's partner in marriage; it may be an offer of a worldly fortune in exchange for dishonest services, or it may be an ordinary temptation. In such moments God is ever present with His grace. If one chooses the better part, the accepted grace becomes a stepping stone to additional and richer graces; if he rejects the grace, it is the beginning of a downgrade course in the spiritual life that is difficult at times to arrest. Many a wrecked life can be traced to the rejection of grace in the moment of decision. Thus we can say that no one is ever justified in using unlawful means to frustrate the laws of nature. Sacrifice at times may be required, but in moments of decision God's grace is there to help if individuals will only cooperate. Since the fall of our first parents, God has always asked human beings to accept or to undertake what is difficult, painful and heroic. The greatest sacrifice that God ever asked was that which He asked of His own Son, the sacrifice of His life on the cross.

Did parents who have faced retardation in their children ever have moments of black despair and feelings of discouragement?

Just as in other problems of human life it is inevitable that there will be moments of discouragement and feelings of frustration. Mrs. Frank Shaw writes: "For me it was a long time before I knew our cross was our blessing, and that we had been selected and not forgotten by our Lord when He gave Barby to us." Mr. and Mrs. Otto Vlasaty remark: "It isn't easy. We had lots of bad moments." Another parent remarks: "Finding most of my relatives silent when they learned that my darling was retarded and that I might need the relief and the companionship of friends, I began to understand our Lord's sorrow when His best friends failed Him."

When our Blessed Saviour suffered the blackness of desolation and sorrow and the terrible feeling of *aleness* in the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane on the Holy Thursday of long ago, Sacred Scripture tells us that an angel of consolation came to comfort and console Him. So too, in the modern Garden of Gethsemane as parents face the feeling of aleness and sorrow, these parents who have encountered retardation now try to become angels of consolation to bring to others the comfort and consolation of their heartfelt understanding and the experience of their simple methods in handling the situation. Dr. and Mrs. Shaw voice the sentiment very well for all when they close their letter: "For a long time

we have felt the need of help for new parents of a retarded child. In moments of black despair how less hopeless we would have felt if we had only known someone else who had a retarded child. Only parents of a retarded little one can establish the necessary bond of understanding. The new parents of a retarded child know that you, too, have shared the same joys and sorrows of this very special child."

IN closing this second article let me submit a special prayer for retarded children and for their parents:

"O good and sweetest Jesus Who wast willing to be born in a stable to free us from the darkness of sin, to draw us to Thyself and inflame us with Thy holy love, hear and accept our humble prayer.

We adore Thee as our Creator and Redeemer; we adopt and choose Thee for our King and Lord; for tribute we offer Thee all the affections of our poor hearts.

Down here on earth Thou didst permit the little ones to be caressed by Thy divine hand and didst counsel all of us to become as little children. Extend today, we beseech Thee, the hand of Thy providence over all children, but especially those little ones who are limited in the full use of their mental powers. If it be Thy holy will, illuminate them with the light of Thy understanding and restore to them complete mental vigor. If it be Thy holy will, however, that they always remain mentally as little children,

protect and preserve them from any misunderstanding or danger.

Diffuse the spirit of Thy ardent charity into all Christian hearts so that everyone may come to their aid. Send down abundant graces on all who in any way provide for this childlike portion of Thy flock. Grant to all of us as parents of a retarded child Thy boundless protection, loving care and gentle encouragement.

Virgin most holy, mother of the Infant Jesus, comforter of the afflicted, we fly to thy maternal love with a lively faith. As thou didst once cradle the Infant Jesus, always keep and protect all retarded little ones. Amen."

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

To Parents of a
Handicapped Child

*May He Who cloaked infinity
divine*

*In tiny human babyhood,
beguiled*

*For sinful men redemption
to design*

*Through donning the depend-
ence of a child -*

*True consolation for your heart-
ache be*

*That less than perfect is the
child you bore;*

*For He Who chose to hide
infinity*

*Your child to its perfection
will restore.*

D.F.M.

December, 1957

THROWING HER WEIGHT AROUND

St. Pius X used often to quote the saying of St. Francis de Sales: "A sad saint is a sorry saint." The pope himself was always good-humored and did not hesitate on occasion to poke gentle fun. During one audience, for example, he noticed a massively built female pilgrim resolutely elbowing her way forward in an effort to gain a position in the front row. The pontiff watched her for a moment. His eyes twinkled; then he smiled at her as he said: "My daughter, it is certainly true that faith moves mountains."

Redemptorist Record

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The Irish Digest gives the following definition of a clock: a little instrument that passes the time by keeping its hands busy.

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NEVER GOT AROUND TO IT

Mrs. Jones had raised nine children on a Michigan farm, fed them and the farm hands, done all her housework and helped with the outdoor chores. She had never been ill a day in her life.

One day a doctor said to her: "I constantly see young women who have only one or two children and whose homes are full of gadgets to lighten work, but who suffer from nervous exhaustion or psychosomatic aches and pains. How is it that you managed through all these years never to have a nervous breakdown?"

"You know, doctor," said the hard-working woman wistfully, "I've always wanted to have a nervous breakdown. But every time I was about to get around to it, it was time to fix somebody a meal."

Capper's Weekly

For Wives and Husbands Only

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

Presumption vs. Confidence in God

PROBLEM: I have read some of the letters in *THE LIGUORIAN* in which parents of large families accuse those who practice rhythm for one good reason or another of showing lack of confidence in God. They describe the joy of letting the decision on how many children they will have entirely up to the Lord. This intrigues me, but it makes me wonder if one cannot be guilty of the sin of presumption in this matter. When I was instructed before becoming a Catholic, the priest described the sin of presumption as that in which a person willingly puts himself into great danger or great hardship and expects God miraculously to rescue him. Could not parents who reject all use of rhythm, while they have small prospect of properly providing for a large family, sin by presumption?

SOLUTION: There are three types of situations in which husbands and wives find themselves.

1) There is that in which elementary prudence makes it practically mandatory that they practice continence or rhythm for a short or long period of time. Obvious examples are those in which the wife has a severe heart disability, or kidney infection, or when the husband is a chronic invalid and cannot possibly support his family.

2) There is the situation in which at a given time there is no valid reason present for adopting the practice of rhythm. The husband's income is more than adequate; the wife's health is excellent; the home is an ample one; the future is rosy.

Often those who speak derogatively of either continence or rhythm have these cases in mind, for the simple reason that even such parents can permit vague fears about the future make them unwilling to have a fairly large family. For what is unknown about the future God must always be trusted.

3) There is the situation in which there are reasons sufficient to make the practice of rhythm permissible for a time, but not sufficient to make it imprudent or presumptuous for a husband and wife to forego its practice and trust in God to help them provide for the children they may have. For example: the wife is not in the best of health, but there is no real danger that child-bearing will be a risk of her life; or the husband has a very moderate income and cannot be sure how he will meet the expenses of a large family. In such cases a confessor might say to the husband and wife: you have sufficient reason to use rhythm for a while, but it would be better to trust completely in God. In all such cases, of course, there must be mutual agreement between husband and wife as to whether the permission for rhythm is to be used or not used, and no danger of mortal sin in its being used.

There is little doubt that the largest number of cases come under this third head, in which the evidence at hand in no wise forces the conclusion that it would be clearly presumptuous to trust God. It is here that nobility and heroicity may manifest themselves. And life is full of examples of how such nobility and

confidence in God are marvellously rewarded.

The role of the heroic may be beyond the capacity of many husbands and wives. Yet the opposite extreme of heroism, namely, smallness of soul, fear of sacri-

fice, lack of a deep confidence in God, human respect, are so common today that it is good to see and read the stories of those who give God the benefits of their doubts about the future and surrender themselves completely to His care.

Thoughts for the Shut-in

Mental Illness

Joseph M. Redmond, C.S.S.R.

A MOST difficult cross to bear, surely, is that of insanity in any form. There is something that wrenches at the heart to see a human mind, meant to be so bright and wonderful an instrument, unhinged and unable to operate correctly and with true vision.

It should be emphasized, of course, that it is not the mind itself which is defective, but rather the physical envelope which contains it. Here on earth man's intelligence, although a spiritual faculty, depends on physical factors for its right functioning. Brain tissue and complex nervous system: these are the tools that the mind, like a master craftsman, needs to produce its masterpiece of rational judgment. When the tools are ill-formed or deficient in some respect, the mind is unable to do its work.

It is important to note this because one of the chief consolations for the mentally deficient, as well as for those who love them, should be that one day there will be no such deficiency. There is no insanity in heaven. There every human mind will be seen as clear and bright, and when the human body is restored at the last day, it will be without those defects which cramped and hemmed in the mind on earth. Mind and body together, indeed, will be able to act in a manner far transcending our present mode of existence.

For those totally insane there is, of course, no suffering in the human sense

of the word. They are like children before the dawning of reason, without responsibility, without conscious duties to perform. They are in a sense to be envied, since there is no further risk of their losing God's grace and committing serious sin. In such cases, the heavier cross rests upon relatives and friends, who must adjust themselves to this strange and difficult phenomenon in their family.

More worthy of pity is the condition of the individuals who are only partially or at certain periods mentally unbalanced. To realize that gradually one's mind is slipping from its moorings, and to be unable to do anything about it, this can be productive of the keenest anguish.

For such as these only a completely spiritual attitude will give consolation. They must bring themselves to realize that God's providence can permit nothing to happen without a reason and a purpose. He does not always let us see what that purpose is, because He wants us to trust Him even in darkness, and thus prove our loyalty. But it is sufficient to genuine faith to know that sufferings patiently borne can bring us into close association with Christ in His tremendous task of redeeming and saving the world.

Let those who bear the cross of mental illness try thus to conform themselves to God's holy will. For as the poet Dante said: In His will is our peace.

SIDEGLANCES

By the Bystander

Program for Parents of Catholic Children Not in Catholic Schools

DESPITE the vast expansion of the Catholic school system in recent years, it is well known that there are some millions of Catholic children who are not able to attend either a Catholic grade or high school. In most instances this is because there is as yet no Catholic school attached to the parish in which the children live, or none available and open to them within a reasonable distance. In some cases it is because the local Catholic school is overcrowded, and has had to exclude some children whose parents were late, perhaps through no fault of their own, in seeking to register them. In a few cases it is because a child has been barred from a Catholic school for bad conduct, or for failure to meet the scholastic requirements.

In all such circumstances, it is obvious that Catholic parents are freed temporarily from the serious obligation imposed on them by the Church of sending their children to a Catholic school. However, this freedom can hardly be looked upon as a release from responsibility. On the contrary, the very fact that circumstances make it impossible for such parents to obey the law of

sending their children to a Catholic school greatly increases their obligation of taking special measures to insure the thoroughly Catholic upbringing of their children.

This obligation must take the form of a program to which such parents will dedicate themselves, and for which they will make any sacrifice. The natural law requires that all parents make themselves the first teachers of their children, especially in matters pertaining to religion. The positive law of the Church insists that whenever possible, Catholic parents, in fulfilling the natural law, seek the assistance of Catholic schools and Catholic teachers. When there are none such available, then a much heavier responsibility falls on the parents themselves. In fulfilling that responsibility, they will act according to the six principles set down and explained in what follows.

I. Parents of children not in Catholic schools must devote themselves in a special way to teaching them the catechism.

All parents should teach their children the elementary truths of

their faith. They should begin this even before the children are old enough to go to school; they should do some teaching or reviewing or re-emphasizing of truths of the catechism even after the children have started attending a Catholic school. It is simply wrong for a Catholic parent to say: "I never speak to the children about religion; they get all they need about that in the Catholic school."

But when a child cannot attend a Catholic school, the parents' role as teacher becomes tremendously more necessary and important. In a Catholic school a child usually has a daily instruction period in Christian doctrine; furthermore, all the teaching is permeated with references to Christian truths. A child in a public school has none of this; therefore the parents must make up for the lack in the best way they can.

To do this, they should provide each of their children with a catechism suited to their age. At a set time each day, perhaps after the evening meal, perhaps just before the children retire, one or both of the parents should go over a short section of the catechism with the children, asking them to memorize the answers, and then to understand them insofar as possible.

Parents should not say they are not equipped to do this much. If

they can read at all, they surely can read a child's catechism. If they are Catholic in more than name only, they can understand and explain most of a child's catechism to their children. What they do not understand at first, they can learn about by their own reading and later explain to the children.

II. Parents of children not in Catholic schools must make their homes obviously and thoroughly Catholic homes.

Children who are attending a Catholic school are surrounded most of the day by reminders of the fundamentals of their Catholic faith. There is a crucifix on the wall of their classroom. The day's work is begun with prayer. The religious garb of the Sisters is a symbol of how much God can be loved. The church is near at hand, inviting visits to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in remission and after school.

All Catholic homes should also have a Catholic appearance, but again this is doubly important when there is no Catholic atmosphere or appearance in the school that a child attends. This Catholic appearance or atmosphere is created by a combination of many little things.

There should be a crucifix and a picture of the Mother of Christ in the living room of the home. There should be at least a small crucifix in each bedroom of the

home. Holy water should be available for daily use. A Bible, a Catholic newspaper, one or two or more Catholic magazines should constantly be available in the living room. The family rosary should be said, perhaps in connexion with the short catechism instruction of the day. A Catholic calendar should be hung up in a prominent place, so that all members of the family will be made aware of the feasts and fasts and liturgical seasons of the year.

Above all, the parents should set an example of frequent reception of the sacraments of confession and Holy Communion, gently yet forcefully urging the children to follow their example. All these things the parents do in recognition of their obligation to make up for what the children are missing in not being able to attend a Catholic school.

III. *Parents of children not in Catholic schools must remember that they are bound under pain of mortal sin to send them to the regular instruction classes held by their pastor for such children, unless this is impossible.*

It is necessary that children be taught the elements of their religion in the home, both through the example and by the instruction of their parents; it is equally necessary that they receive regular instructions from a priest. The parish priest represents the teaching authority of the Church, given

by Christ in the words: "Going, therefore, *teach* all nations."

Just as no Catholic parent whose children are within reach of a Catholic school may rightly say that their children are adequately instructed in the home and do not need the school, so no Catholic parent of children not in a Catholic school may say that they do not need the instructions of the priest.

The parish priest is bound by his calling to instruct, or to provide priestly instruction, for all the children of his flock. He is bound to prepare them for first confession, for Communion and confirmation; he is bound to see to it personally that they know their faith well enough to practice it and defend it in a largely pagan world. He is bound to do these things when the children are in a Catholic school; the obligation is even greater when they are not in a Catholic school.

Therefore, even at some sacrifice, parents are seriously bound to have their children present at the hour announced for children's instruction. This holds, too, for high school boys and girls. If they are not in a Catholic school, the parents are obligated to see to it that they attend the instructions for such children.

IV. *Parents of Catholic children not in Catholic schools should consider themselves bound*

in conscience to enroll them in vacation religious courses that may be held in their parish.

In many rural areas of the United States where the parishes are too small to support a Catholic school, the practice has been introduced of inviting a group of nuns to come in the summer and conduct a one-week or two-week course in religion for all the children.

This practice has had excellent and far-reaching results. It brings the children into contact with Sisters. It gives them a review of their catechism, and teaches them many little things about their religion that they might otherwise never learn. It provides the children with knowledge and incentives concerning a religious vocation that they would have missed entirely if they never came into personal contact with Sisters.

If the pastor of a parish that has no school takes the trouble and expense of bringing in Sisters for a summer religious course, all Catholic parents should eagerly cooperate with the plan, even though it means driving the children some distance to and from the church. And they should charitably vie with one another to take care of the Sisters, if housing accommodations are needed by them during their stay.

V. Parents of children not in a Catholic school must look for and

utilize any opportunity for transferring them to a Catholic school.

Canon 1374 of the Code of Catholic legislation, which simply states that Catholic children are not to attend other than Catholic schools except for grave reasons and with the permission of the bishop, does not fall out because a child has been forced by circumstances to start going to a public school. The obligation remains, and the parents are expected to obey it if the circumstances change and an opportunity arises for sending their child to a Catholic school.

Thus there is no force to the argument of some Catholic parents who say that, because their child started in a public school, it is better to leave him there than to make a transfer when a Catholic school is opened in their parish. In the exceptional case of a retarded child there might be a reason, in that the child was receiving special attention that could not be given in the Catholic school. But even in that case, the permission of the pastor should be obtained.

VI. Parents of children not in Catholic schools should eagerly favor and promote the erection of a Catholic school in their parish as soon as practically possible.

Canon 1379 of the laws of the Church says that, if in any area, there is a lack of Catholic grade schools, high schools or colleges,

it is the duty of the bishop of the place to work toward establishing such. Then it adds that the faithful are to offer every help they can toward building and maintaining such schools.

In some instances the bishop of a diocese and the pastors under his authority are prevented from carrying out this law only by the indifference or opposition of the Catholics who need the school. Those in authority must act with prudence in this matter, that is, with some assurance that sufficient funds will be forthcoming from the people of an area both to build and maintain a school for their children.

All the Catholics whose children cannot attend a Catholic school should 1) want a Catholic high school within reach of their children; 2) use all the moral suasion they can to bring their fellow-parishioners to feel the same way; 3) be ready to contribute with generosity and sacrifice to any proposed project of building a needed Catholic school. When the majority of the people of any parish have this attitude and let it be known, it is usually easy for the bishop and the pastor to authorize the building of the school that they need.

This duty of promoting and contributing to a needed Catholic school applies not only to parents who have children of school age, but to all the Catholics of the area that has no Catholic school. It oft-

en happens that a block of opposition to the erection of a Catholic school is raised by influential Catholics whose children have already finished their schooling, and who feel that they should not have to share the burden of providing a Catholic school for other people's children.

This is surely not a truly Catholic attitude. The right attitude, which should be shared by everybody who possesses the faith and a spirit of loyalty to the Church, is that no parish plant is complete until it includes a parochial school. More than that, all the Catholics of a parish should want to see every high school boy and girl of the parish having the opportunity to attend a Catholic high school.

ALL the people of a parish, even older single people and those who have no children to be educated, benefit by a Catholic school in their midst. All are helped to live a full Catholic and parochial life by the prayers and example of the teaching Sisters and by the inspiration of the children, who are learning to love God more perfectly even as they learn to fit themselves for a useful and happy life in this world. Therefore no Catholic should ever raise his voice against the desirability of a school in his parish, nor drop his hands and do nothing to help when the time comes to build one.

Code of Catholic Conduct

Confession during Sunday Mass

ERNEST F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

IN many churches, particularly in the country, confessions are heard during the early Masses on Sunday. There is a good and valid reason for this.

Some people live far out in the country and find it seriously inconvenient to drive all the way to the church on Saturday afternoon or evening in order to go to confession. Other people work in the city, but their hours for work come at such strange intervals as to render confession impossible at the regularly scheduled times. The only time these people can go to confession ordinarily is during the Mass on Sunday morning. It is for their convenience that Sunday morning confession is made available.

We do not direct any of these remarks against persons who have a good reason for going to confession on Sunday morning.

But for people who have no such valid reason Sunday morning confession is inexcusable. It is not proper.

First of all, going to confession while Mass is going on takes the attention away from the Mass. One is expected to concentrate on the great drama unfolding on the altar when one comes to church on Sunday morning. It seems strange that a man or a woman should be behind the folds of a confessional, speaking to a confessor about the affairs of conscience, while up on the altar the offertory or

the consecration is going on. It makes one wonder whether or not a principal part of the Mass is being missed.

Secondly, it is a sign of laziness. Why did not the man or the woman go to confession at the regular time on Saturday? Because it would have caused inconvenience. If there is an unwillingness to suffer any inconvenience in going to confession, can there be any certainty that all the graces possible will come to the soul that are the result of a worthy confession? Another name for confession is "the sacrament of penance." The very name supposes that those who go to confession do penance for their sins.

But here is a man (or a woman) who cannot work up enough spiritual energy to break away from the ease and comfort of home on a Saturday afternoon or evening in order to go to confession. That is laziness, indeed. And what kind of confession does such a person make on a Sunday morning when the intention is to kill two birds with one stone — the Sunday Mass obligation and the reception of the sacrament of penance?

There are no shortcuts to heaven. Combining the Mass and confession on Sunday, without a good reason, is an attempt at a shortcut. Take the regular and appointed way to God — which, though it may be a bit longer, is still the shortest way home to heaven.



readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Are We Coddling the Men?

"I do not care to renew my subscription. Some of the things that you are trying to push off on women as truths about love and marriage make me blow a fuse. I can't stand the cold, unfeeling answers you give to wives who have problems in what you call the holy sacrament of marriage. This one true Church certainly has little regard for women. I'm surprised they make such a fuss over the Mother of God. If what you preach about love and marriage is the truth, then it's the truth only for the Church. Don't you know there are very few men who believe in self-restraint? All I read in your magazine is about the duty of a wife to please her husband, the sacrifice a wife must make, etc. How stuffy can you get? What man is worth all that? In the back of every man's mind is the *other woman*. There will always be sin in the world. We women get blamed for it. But the real culprit is man.

N. N.

Mrs. J. D. P."

• *We surmise that this lady has had a very unfortunate experience in marriage, which makes her read into the lines we write about the problems of marriage things that are not there. Nobody but God will ever be able to answer the question: "Are men more responsible for the sins of the world than women?" Or the other question: "Are there fewer good men in the world than women?" Not*

knowing the answer to either of these questions, we try to present what help we can to both men and women to escape sin. Such articles (now pamphlets) as How to Be a Good Husband, How to Be a Good Father, Ten Signs of Love in Marriage, Marriage and Money, can certainly not be said to evade speaking of the duties of men. If our correspondent's complaint is chiefly (as we suspect) over the duty of a wife to fulfill the contract of marriage, then her quarrel is not with us, but with God and the Bible. And if she has found nothing in THE LIGUORIAN condemning selfishness and adultery on the part of husbands, she has read very little of it.

The editors

Missing Part of Mass on Sunday

"On the past two Sundays (at different Masses) I have warned the people of this parish of an *error* unfortunately prevalent among many Catholics. Imagine my consternation and chagrin to find the same error proposed, inadvertently I am sure, by Father Ernest Miller in his Code of Catholic Conduct on How to Hear Mass on page 15 of the September issue. There he asks: 'How much of the Mass must be heard on Sunday to assure a Catholic that he has fulfilled his obligation?' To which he replies: 'The three principal parts — the offertory, the consecration and the Communion.' All moralists agree

that to fulfill the obligation of Mass on Sunday a Catholic must hear an *entire* Mass, not just the essential or integral parts; everything from the opening sign of the cross to the last blessing — or *Ite, Missa est* — at least. Father Miller adds quite correctly, 'To miss any one of these three parts without a serious reason is a mortal sin.' I would say that he should have added: 'Wilfully to miss even a small part of the Mass before the offertory or after the Communion without a proportionate reason is a *venial* sin.' I trust that you will print a correction of this error, lest you be guilty of confirming and spreading the erroneous belief already too widespread among Catholics, that the Sunday Mass obligation is fulfilled as long as they arrive before the offertory and do not leave until after the priest's Communion.

Calif.

Father J. J. F."

• *The writer of the above letter is quite justified in calling attention to the fact that the article should have gone on to mention that to miss even a small part of the Mass on Sunday is a venial sin. As mentioned in another letter we received on this matter THE LIGUORIAN has often at least implied the necessity for assistance at a complete Mass in order to fulfill the Sunday obligation. Nevertheless, the point should have been made again in the article mentioned, because there are too many Catholics who seem to think nothing of trailing slowly toward the church when they know the Mass has been going on for some minutes or who leave, without any reason, immediately after the priest's Communion.*

The editors

Around We Go!

"Even though I am not a Catholic, I used to look forward to each issue of THE LIGUORIAN. However, this controversy about birth-control seems replete

with silly arguments. I tried not to get into it, but can't hold back any longer. You talk about natural law and the fact that men in Biblical days did not practice birth-control. Look at Adam and Eve. Did they have a bunch of children? Only Cain, Abel and Seth. You say that in those days husbands and wives had relations only to have children, and therefore it is sinful for a man to have relations with his wife when she is pregnant or during the safe period. There are many people who cannot cope with ten children. I believe the Catholic Church wants people to have lots of children because she wants to increase her membership.

New York

A. R. M.

• *Our correspondent did not read his Bible very carefully. Genesis, 5; 4, states that Adam and Eve "begot sons and daughters." (If they had no daughters, how would the human race have been continued?) Again, the Bible nowhere states that the married had relations only for conception; rather it supports the Christian principle that the contract of marriage gives husband and wife the right to the proper performance of the marriage act whenever they wish it. . . . If the Church were against birth-prevention only to increase her membership, then she is making a terrible mistake in preaching the glories of celibacy and virginity for the love of God.*

The editors

Weddings of Divorced Persons

"In your September issue you said that office workers might, to avoid great odium and hardship, attend the wedding of one of their number to a divorced man, if they had reason to believe the persons were in good faith. Your tolerance of the complacency of Protestants about divorce and your frequent expressions of respect

for their sincerity and good faith, is, in my opinion, a kind of hypocrisy. We Catholics are requested to stay away from movies that treat lightly of marriage and approve the acceptability of divorce; how then can you justify your advice to Catholics that, in the case mentioned, it would be odious and discriminatory not to attend the so-called wedding of a divorced person? Would you expect this woman, in order to avoid being odious and discriminatory, to wish her friend happiness in her adulterous marriage?

Seattle, Wash.

M. D."

• *The Church permits the attendance of Catholics at valid weddings of Protestant friends in Protestant churches, assuming that this in no wise expresses approval of the Protestant religion. There can be exceptional cases in which, for grave reasons, and when scandal is prevented as much as possible, a Catholic might be permitted to attend an invalid wedding of a person in good faith without in any way showing approval either of the Protestant Church or the invalid marriage. We thought that such an exception might be made for the case presented. If we were writing the article over, we would now say: "Ask your pastor, who will know more about the unavoidable scandal involved."*

The editors

Same Subject

"I honestly believe that your magazine has given the real Catholic approach to moral problems better than any Catholic publication I know. But you certainly nodded in your September issue concerning the attendance of office girls at the wedding of one of their number when the bridegroom is a divorced man. You stated the principles clearly, but certainly seemed to slip in your application. Aside from the question of whether two Lutherans can be in good faith in such a case, how can you possibly conceive that scandal

can be removed if Catholics attend such a wedding, scandal to those involved in the so-called marriage, scandal to those in attendance, scandal to those at the office, scandal in many other ways. This is not a case of friendly attendance at a valid Protestant marriage, but rather a mockery of marriage, and Catholics are in no way justified in having anything to do with it.

N. N.

Msgr. F. S. L."

• *It is indeed likely that we took it too much for granted that scandal could be removed, in behalf of charity, in the case referred to. We should have added that all such exceptional cases should be referred to the local pastor, who will always be more aware of the circumstances involved than we could be from the hearing of a few facts about it.*

The editors

Again . . .

"I must say you have me confused in the answer you gave about Catholic office girls attending the wedding of a Lutheran girl to a divorced man. I am a convert, and usually pass on my LIGUORIANS to a non-Catholic friend. But I did not pass the September issue on. Not long ago, a divorcee in my family attempted a second marriage. I called my pastor about going to the wedding. He said I most certainly must not go. I could see his point. My attendance would look like approval. I believe that any Catholic who practices his religion would not think of attending a so-called wedding of a divorced person. Don't think that, if you are a Catholic, and have a non-Catholic family and many non-Catholic friends, something like this doesn't make them smile.

Texas

Mrs. B. G."

• *As said above, the proper thing is always to ask one's pastor in these perplexing problems. We repeat the general principle that Catholics may never show*

approval of divorce and re-marriage. There is no exception to that principle.

The editors

Too Touchy?

"I consider myself a good Catholic, and have often wondered why it is considered so terrible for a Catholic to go to a Protestant wedding or funeral. I used to go to church once in a while with a non-Catholic friend, and she often went to Mass with me. To this day I don't see that I did anything wrong. We are supposed to love all our neighbors, and to me it is teaching people to be prejudiced to tell them to have nothing to do with non-Catholics. I would like to pass on my LIGUORIAN to non-Catholic friends, but some things in it are too touchy and would only cause hard feelings. I enjoy the LIGUORIAN but don't agree with all of it.

Cincinnati, O.

Mrs. W. H."

• *Three points here: 1) It is not a sin for a Catholic to attend a valid Protestant wedding or a funeral, if the person honored by such attendance is a relative or close friend, and if no part is taken in the worship. 2) Catholics are forbidden to attend other-than-Catholic church services, except in the above cases, because such voluntary attendance is exactly like saying: "I don't believe that there is only one true religion. I believe that many different religions are true." This does not mean that Catholics are to have nothing to do with non-Catholics. If they don't love their non-Catholic neighbors and prove that love, they will end up in hell. 3) Passing on THE LIGUORIAN will do more good than harm, even though someone may take offense at what he reads.*

The editors

Large Families

"I was not surprised to see the feature letter in your September issue, because I have observed that, while your staff edits, prunes and censors letters that

differ with your views, it devotes a great deal of space to those that agree with your generally disapproving attitude regarding rhythm. I can imagine the joy with which you received and printed the letter of Mrs. G. P., since it refutes the arguments of the hundreds of letters you must have received saying that rhythm is a godsend to a struggling family. It is not my experience that the old-time large families were such happy ones. A woman I know who was raised in a family of eleven tells me that sometimes in winter she could not go to school because she had no shoes. She never even possessed a doll. Statistics recently gathered prove that children of large families do not have large families themselves, indicating that they must not have found their large family backgrounds so pleasant. As to large families providing vocations, I know a town in which the Catholic parish is 50 years old, and, until last year, had not produced a single priest or sister.

N. N.

E. S."

• *We do not think our attitude toward rhythm is "a generally disapproving one." All that we write on the subject is based on the Holy Father's instruction on the subject, and he himself said, as we say often, that for certain serious reasons rhythm is permissible, and in some cases it may even be in a sense obligatory. Certainly we have made it clear that "a struggling Catholic family," that is, one that is in debt and has a difficult time making ends meet, has what the Pope called the economic reason for practicing rhythm, if both husband and wife can agree on it and if it is practiced without grave danger of sin. Individual examples of unhappy large families prove nothing, especially when drawn from the past, before the era of social justice, living wages and prosperity. There were many unhappy small families in those days too.*

The editors

Tipping

"Three big cheers from me on your article on tipping in the September issue. Tipping to me is nothing short of a racket since originally tipping was supposed to be a way of expressing pleasure for service received. If patrons of restaurants would stop tipping, unless they felt that it was deserved, the owners would open their purses and give their help a living wage, and all tips would be a bonus for fine work.

Chicago, Ill.

Mrs. R. W."

ings might well be unavoidable in the face of reckless driving, impoliteness in church, etc. But true charity could still be practiced by making a valiant effort to overcome one's feelings and keep them in their proper place, at the same time showing kindness even to the erring. And one could do this even while administering necessary correction when it will do some good.

The editors

Perfect Score

"Regarding the article How to Love Everybody in the September LIGUORIAN, the questions presented at the end leave me cold. 'Are you generally patient, etc.' My answer would be yes, until I realize how it irks me when I see people in their grossly abbreviated dress, or when I see flagrantly reckless driving, etc. 'Are you kind, etc.' Yes, until someone tries to push me around. The colored boy in the barber shop I frequent is insolent and bossy. Am I supposed to turn the other cheek? A perfect score is 100%, but I would like to learn more from you as to why you indicate it is possible to reach 90% in dealing with others.

St. Louis, Mo.

J. K."

• *Surely we would be regarded as somewhat cynical if we were to state that it is impossible for any human being to have a 90 percent perfect love of his fellow man. Consider the saints; their charity had to be more than 90 percent perfect, or it would not have been declared heroic. Someone might object that saints are rare, and we would agree, but the fact remains that if they could practice such charity, it is not impossible for any human being. Perhaps our correspondent's difficulty stems from confusing feelings with the practice of virtue. Charity as a virtue is a matter of the will. Upset feel-*

Kind Words

"I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you what your magazine has come to mean to me in the times when I look for sincere help and staunch support in the difficult task of raising a Catholic family in the complete spirit of Catholicism today.

We have seven children now and will be glad to receive as many as God, in His holy will, chooses to send us. In maintaining our point of view in the face of criticism, sarcasm and derision, and in preparing to guide our children along the road to heaven, your magazine has served as a short course in theology for the layman—clear, concise and straightforward.

Bridgeport, Conn.

M. G. McG."

"Among other benefits received at a retreat week end at San Alfonso, West End, N. J., just recently, it was my good fortune to read some back issues of THE LIGUORIAN. These were '53-'55 issues and the subscription price then was \$2.00. I'm sure with everything else, the subscription price must be higher now, and understandably so. After reading a few articles, I wondered where has this magazine been all my life—rather, where have I been?

Trenton, N.J.

N.F.W."

POINTS of FRICTION

Bad Traits of the Boss

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

SUBMISSION to authority in some way is a necessary duty of every human creature. No one can escape obedience. This is the plan and program God set up for the world, that He would delegate His divine authority to parents and other legitimate human superiors. He Himself gave an outstanding example of submitting to that authority, for St. Luke says "He was subject to them," meaning to St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary, His mother and foster-father in the natural order of things.

Now wherever there are human instruments, there are bound to be faults and defects, and it certainly should not occasion surprise if faults are to be found in superiors. Some of these faults inevitably will produce a certain amount of irritation and friction.

Thus, for example, a superior can be the overbearing type, too obviously conscious of his position, ruling or attempting to rule like a small tyrant. Along with this he may be somewhat choleric, easily aroused to impatience and anger, given to "chewing out" his subjects for no serious reasons, but because of his mood at the moment.

Or it may be that in the superior there is a strain of pettiness, so that there is a constant and irritating concentration on minutiae and trivialities, as if these were the all-important substance of life. The opposite of this would be complete indifference on the part of the superior to the

needs and complaints of subjects, so that it almost appears that leadership has become a phantom thing.

These faults are, of course, faults of human nature itself, but which a position of authority can sometimes bring into prominence. And once on display, of course, they can cause a great deal of unhappiness and irritation on the part of those who are subject to them.

How can the friction be lessened? First of all, obviously, superiors have an obligation to work against their faults and failings, and all the more so because of the consequences of their failure to do so. However, all should recognize that perfection is not easily attainable here on earth, and that superiors, even with the best will in the world, will manifest certain defects.

It should be clearly understood that this is precisely the way God wants the world to be run. He does not of course will the faults of superiors, but He set up His plan of delegated authority knowing that faults would be found. And therefore in a sense He uses those faults, and He desires those who are under authority to be purified by them. To supernaturalize one's obedience is to see God's providence even in the faults of superiors, and to practice devotion to duty and charity and patience despite them. Thus will friction be lessened, and the world's work more efficiently done.

ST. RITA

OF CASCIA:

TROUBLED HOMEMAKER

ST. RITA might appropriately be described as the saint with family troubles; she was in a very real sense the victim of an unhappy marriage. This fact, the cynic might say, should give her a wide and almost universal appeal, since trouble and strife are almost universally a part of marriage.

This much at least can be said, that family troubles are far from uncommon. All married couples have them at least in some small measure, and some have them in abundance. The trouble may arise from alcoholism or miserliness or jealousy or a bad habit of nagging. Whatever might be the cause, doubtless many married people have at times been tempted to say: "It's all very well to talk about the saints, but they never had to put up with anything like this."

But to think that way is to be mistaken. Consider briefly the life of St. Rita as evidence to the contrary.

She was born in the year 1381 of an ordinary peasant family in the town of Roccaporena, situated in the central Apennines of Italy. Her par-

LOUIS G. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

ents, we are told, were well past their prime when Rita was given to them, and since she was the child of their old age, they doted on her, and gave her everything they could out of their limited means.

However, when Rita at an early age showed an inclination for convent life, and asked permission of her parents to follow that vocation, their affection showed itself to be misguided. They would not hear of it; they carried on in the strange way common to some parents of all centuries: as if convent life were totally useless and unwarranted. Her parents were indeed devoted in their own way to their Catholic faith. The fact that Rita should think of the convent at all is a tribute to her pious upbringing. But for her to become a nun! Such a thing in their eyes was not to be contemplated.

Instead, as Rita reached the age of fourteen or fifteen, in the full bloom of her maidenhood, they arranged a marriage for her, according

to the custom of that day, with a man of their own choice. And Rita, with a sad and heavy heart, yet feeling that to obey her parents in this matter was to obey God, settled down in her new vocation, resolved to be a good and dutiful wife that thus she might save and sanctify her soul.

Unfortunately, as it turned out, Rita's parents did not make for her a very wise choice of a husband. They had doubtless observed that he was a man of violent temper, but this seemed of small moment in view of financial and other considerations which seemed to make it a "good match." Alas, the violent temper flourished unchecked and rapidly degenerated into downright brutality. Rita did what she could to conceal the household strife and to avoid giving any occasion for anger to her husband. But the neighbors were well aware that often he rained kicks and blows upon his young wife for no other reason perhaps than that he was out of sorts because of losses at the gaming table.

Added to this was that which represents the chief humiliation for any married woman: Rita's husband was guilty of open and flagrant infidelity. He would carouse through the night, and then come home, openly boasting to his wife in his drunken stupor that he had sought out other women.

TWO sons were born to them in the early years of their married life. Rita loved them as any mother must love her children, and did her best to train them and educate them to the knowledge and love of God.

But here again it was her lot to suffer terrible heartache. As the two boys left childhood behind, their unprincipled father took a perverse delight in indoctrinating them into his own evil ways. At an early age they learned their lessons well of how to get drunk, how to quarrel violently, and where to find lecherous companions. Through many a night Rita must have remained in an agony of apprehension in her home, wondering if morning would see her husband or one of her sons brought home to her dead in his sins.

And her apprehension was well justified. One night her husband was stabbed by an enemy he had made as a result of his violent way of life. Before his life ebbed away, however, he came to himself, and showed every sign of repentance for his mis-spent life. That he had such a chance can surely be ascribed in large part to Rita's prayers. As for the two boys, they also died shortly afterwards and at a very early age. For this Rita with breaking heart had prayed, that God would take them, if they would not submit to obeying His laws. "Only let them, Lord," she prayed, "I beseech Thee, die in Thy grace." And her prayer was heard; both on their deathbeds had time to repent and to receive the sacraments.

For eighteen years Rita bore heroically the troubles of her married life. Left alone in the world, it was not long before she sought admission into a nearby Augustinian convent. Here also her suffering was not ended although it came in a different form. In the year 1441, while she

knelt in prayer in the chapel before a crucifix, a thorn detached itself from the head of Christ and fixed itself in her forehead. Here it formed a wound which could be seen by all, and which caused her untold pain. For 16 years she bore this pain, and a wasting disease which accompanied it, being taken care of in an isolated part of her convent. At last, with perfect resignation to God's will, she died, on May 22, 1457, acclaimed a saint by all, and soon officially declared a saint by the Church.

THERE is quite a widespread devotion to St. Rita, and her statue can be found in many churches. She is hailed and invoked as the saint of the impossible, and the saint of desperate cases, a title which she shares, of course, with St. Jude.

For our purpose here, however, we point once more to St. Rita as a patroness for those who are victims of an unhappy marriage. One might ask: why should people stay with such a marriage? Why did St. Rita stick it out for 18 years, when she surely had reason and justification for separation? She did so because it was a task given her by God, and one does not run away from such a task because it turns out to be difficult. Perhaps it was given her to know that the very salvation of her wayward family depended on her patient sacrifice, her unselfish love, and her prayer. At any rate, that was the result of her suffering. And without doubt in heaven today all the suffering seems small in exchange for the happiness it has won for herself and her loved ones.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

To a Sacristan

With constant care and reverential mien

You tend the great King's sacramental throne,

Where every day in priestly hands He's seen

And where He dwells to welcome all His own.

O be you mindful of the night He came

Into the unkempt shelter of a cave;

Say never will you let Him bear the same

Abandonment by those He came to save.

D. F. M.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

To a Seminarian

Your eyes are fixed upon the distant star,

Beneath which men find God, and sinners are

Released from sin, like gods to be reborn

Through Him Who, God, a man became this morn.

Your life will say, like Mary's, "Be it done,"

Again, again, at rise of every sun, And in the manger of your priestly hands

He'll cradled be at each of your commands.

Oh, count no cost of years, privation, pain,

Till at your word the Christ will come again.

D. F. M.

THE LIGUORIAN

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

Christmas Office Parties

It is certain that Christmas parties in many offices or places of business are a scandal and even something like a sacrilege. Those who take the birthday of the Saviour of the world as an occasion for over-drinking, promiscuous kissing and embracing, suggestive remarks and evil conversation, make a mockery out of the greatest religious feast of the year. But this is exactly what many people do.

Such conduct is especially reprehensible in a Catholic. Catholics have the four weeks of Advent in which to be made mindful of the significance of Christmas, with their solemn invitations to penance and prayer. They are commanded to fast and abstain on the day before Christmas to make themselves worthy of the joy of the feast itself. Everybody knows that Catholics profess a high standard of temperance in drinking, fidelity in marriage and cleanliness in speech.

The Catholic who tosses all this aside and plunges into the scandalous goings-on of the wrong kind of Christmas office party like any pagan, is a disgrace to his religion and a source of shame to all other Catholics. Furthermore it is not difficult to realize

the impact of the bad impression his conduct must have upon the non-Catholics in the group. He may contend that individually none of his actions are seriously sinful. He gets tipsy, but not drunk. He kisses the girls, but without evil intention. He listens to and takes part in suggestive remarks, but not in open obscenity.

It is difficult to see why the combination of all these things, and the scandal involved should not make Catholics resolve to stay away from such parties in the future or at least to use their influence to keep them decent.

No Drama in Repentance?

The Oblate magazine, *Mary Immaculate*, calls attention to an exasperating habit of movie producers. It is that of screening the lives of famous personages who drifted into immorality of one kind or another, but without any reference to their final repentance and reconciliation with or conversion to the Catholic Church.

A most recent example of this falsifying of biography by omission is the movie, *Beau James*. It is billed as the story of the glamorous Jimmy Walker, one-time mayor of New York. His sins are all portrayed in

the movie — his infidelity to his first wife, his misuse of his office, his wild parties, etc. But there is not a scene or hint in the movie that before he died, Jimmy Walker publicly renounced his sins, made a humble confession, and died with the sacraments of the Catholic Church. The movie pictures him as still clinging on his deathbed to the woman whose forbidden love he had disavowed.

Those who like movies of famous persons will remember many other examples, if they had read enough to know the true story of the heroes as departed from by the screen presentation.

Song to Remember was a filmed life of the great composer, Chopin. It dwelt at long length on the musician's sins; it omitted entirely his request for a priest when death was approaching, his confession and Holy Viaticum, his taking part in the prayers for the dying.

The Valentino Story purported to describe the life of the sensational movie star, Rudolph Valentino. Of course it pictured his broken marriages, his second and third love affairs. But not a word or a scene about his repentance. On the contrary, it pictured him as dying while holding hands with a married woman whom (according to the scribe) he loved. The truth is that he died after receiving the sacraments of the Church, and while holding and kissing a crucifix that had been placed in his hands by a priest.

Hollywood producers boast about their scientific attempts to be faithful

to fact even in small details, in the movies they make. The above incidents, therefore, and many more like them, force one to draw the conclusion that they often make a deliberate exception for one kind of fact in the lives of those they portray, and that is the fact of their repentance and reconciliation with God.

Perhaps this is the worst of all the indictments that can be made against the makers of movies. Perhaps some of them hate God so deeply that they refuse, even at the expense of truth, to show Him winning a sinner to repentance and granting him the grace of a happy death.

The Legion of Decency

On December 8 thousands of Catholics will renew their pledge not to cooperate with, promote or attend indecent and immoral motion pictures. This means that they will watch the lists published by the Legion of Decency censors and not patronize or allow their children to see any picture that is listed as offensive to good morality and the public welfare.

It is well known that the Legion of Decency is an object of hate to many freethinking and loose-living Americans. Every time one of the sophisticated magazines publishes an article or an editorial touching on the freethinkers' dislike and distrust of the Catholic Church, mention is made of that "vicious enemy of intellectual freedom," that "suppressor of art and beauty," that "un-American institution of boycott," called the Legion of Decency. They would like the motion picture producers to be as free

to depict and exploit and grow financially fat on sexuality, criminality and immorality as a number of the book publishers are, because art, they say, is handcuffed, rendered mute and crippled by any limitations in this regard.

We must be patient with the free-thinker, of course, somewhat in the fashion in which we must be patient with the child who has not yet reached the use of reason or the adult who has lost the use of reason. He may call himself "free in thought" but he has his own set of ironclad dogmas (hated word to him!) that make him a slave to his own conceit. Man is simply an animal, he says; an animal developed just a little bit more than the animals that still bark, bray and browse. There is nothing spiritual about man; no relationship to a Creator ties him down; no accountability for his deeds is expected of him; no subjection to an eternal law rests upon his consciousness.

These are the dogmas of the free-thinkers, and he swallows them with the same guilelessness with which children may be made to believe in Santa Claus or the stork. One of the conclusions that he draws from his dogmas is that anyone who acts as though there were a God, or manifests a sense of accountability for his actions, is an enemy of the public welfare.

Between the dogmas of the free-thinker and those of the people who make and keep the pledge of the Legion of Decency, the thinking man, that is, the man who is really free,

must choose. On the latter side there is common sense, reason, practical experience, knowledge of human nature and an intelligent concern both for the good of individual human beings and the welfare of the whole country. On all these counts the Legion is a great blessing to the country and every citizen who makes and keeps its pledge is a patriot in the best sense of the word.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

*To a Mother Whose Baby Has
Just Been Born in a Hospital*

You hold your baby
In a soft warm bed;
Mary holds hers
In a cattle-shed.

You see neat nurses
Whom a whisper calls;
Mary's attendants
Are beasts in stalls.

You will dress your baby
In frills and bows;
Mary had only
The swaddling clothes.

Mary renounced
What you have for this:
To offer your child.
Her Son's sweet kiss,

To awaken its soul
From the death of sin
And let His life
Enter quickly in.

Give thanks, young mother,
This holy morn;
For the Babe through whom
Your babe is reborn.

D.F.M.

LIGUORIANA

Scandal

By St. Alphonsus
Selected and Edited by
John P. Schaefer, C.S.S.R.

THEOLOGIANs define scandal as "an occasioned sin." And they distinguish two species or types of this sin — *active* and *passive* scandal.

Active scandal is an improper word or action (and in this category an omission or failure to act is also included), lending an occasion for another's spiritual harm. In this definition of active scandal I use the word "improper" designedly. For to be a source of scandal an action or word may either be evil in itself — as, for instance, to speak of obscene things before a young person; or it may partake of the nature of evil — for example, if a person, for a just cause, even though others were ignorant of it, were to eat meat on a day when meat is forbidden.

With this explanation of its nature we can understand that active scandal can be of two kinds. It may be *direct*: in which case the spiritual harm of the other is expressly intended. That is, an action is performed, so that another might be induced to sin: for example, an adulterer seduces another to commit adultery.

Or it may be *indirect*: that is, the spiritual harm or sin of another is not intended, but can be said to be caused. This would be the case were you to perform an action despite your realization that it will probably induce another to commit sin. For example, were you to commit a sin in the presence of little children; or to eat meat on a forbidden day, without explaining that you have a sufficient excuse.

Passive scandal is the actual spiritual harm or sin into which one falls because of another's word or action. It, in turn, may either be *given* scandal or *received* scandal. The former, which arises from active scandal, is frequently called scandal of *children*. While *received* scandal, which has its source not in active scandal, but in one's own malice, is called *pharisaical*. It takes its *name* from the hatred and envy which the Pharisees bore Christ, and which was occasioned by His words and deeds.

Bearing this explanation and these divisions of scandal in mind, it should be clear that for active scandal to be present, it is not necessary that passive scandal actually follow. It is sufficient that an occasion be presented from which, by its very nature, passive scandal can follow.

Someone may, for instance, wish to induce another to commit sin, without the other party consenting to do so. On the other hand, too, passive scandal may result without active scandal being present.

Passive scandal is not a special sin. Nor does it add to the seriousness of a sin. For instance, one who steals, after witnessing the theft of another, does not sin more seriously merely because of that circumstance.

It is not always a sin of scandal if one sins in the presence of others. It is only such when, in view of the surrounding circumstances, someone, who otherwise would not commit sin, would probably be led into sin by this action. Such surrounding circumstances can arise either from the person who performs the action, or from those before whom the action is performed.

THEOLOGIANs commonly teach that all active scandal which directly intends the spiritual ruin of another, is a special sin against charity. A number of special cases depend upon and can be settled by this principle.

Unless he is excused because of insufficient deliberation, one who provides the occasion for another's serious spiritual ruin, also commits a mortal sin. In this manner an indifferent action, or one which is venially wrong, often becomes a mortal sin, because of the scandal involved.

In the same manner, one who provides the occasion for another's venial spiritual harm, also sins venially because of the scandal involved. This

is true, even though the harm is directly intended and even though it may have been caused by an action mortally sinful. The reason for this is that the harm itself is venial or small.

One who commits a sin of scandal, besides the scandal, also commits a sin of the same nature into which he induces another to fall. He is, therefore, bound to confess the type of mortal sin by which and to which he has induced another. Also to be included in such a one's confession is the number of those who were affected, or who probably could have been affected by this sin.

Even though someone who scandalizes others is bound once more to give them good example, he is not bound to restitution because of his scandal. Even if a person, by his example alone, were to have been the cause of another committing a sin of theft, such a sin of scandal would not oblige him to make restitution for the other's theft. For he has sinned not against justice, but against charity, in scandalizing the other. Notice that I said, "by his example *alone*." For if one cooperates in the sin of theft by such means as counsel, command or exhortation, he is bound to restitution according to the nature of his cooperation.

EVEN though a sin be publicly committed, it does not necessarily also involve a sin of scandal. For it may be committed in the presence of such people who, either because of their baseness and wicked character, or because of their integ-

riety and strong character, would not be induced to commit sin from witnessing public sin.

Nor is an action a sin of scandal merely because it causes another to suspect or to think evilly of such a man. For such suspicions and thoughts, if founded upon sufficient evidence, are not sinful thoughts. It is an entirely different matter, however, if one's actions or words induce another to look down upon or to treat with contempt the Catholic faith, the clergy, a religious order, or to be less inclined toward sanctity. It is abundantly evident, therefore, that scandal is much more easily given by those who are in a position of great authority, or who enjoy a reputation for sanctity.

Let me now pose a very practical and necessary question: When is the sin of scandal a special sin?

In my opinion, anyone who either directly or indirectly induces his neighbor to commit sin, himself commits a twofold sin: he sins against charity as well as against the virtue against which he has induced his neighbor to offend.

It can scarcely be denied that such a person offends against charity. For charity obliges us to correct our neighbor, and, when possible, to prevent him from falling into sin. All the more so does it oblige us not to urge him to commit sin by our advice or by our example. This is the evident teaching of St. Thomas, who writes: "When anyone, by his evil words or deeds, intends to lead an-

other into sin; or even when he does not intend to do so and his action itself is conducive to leading another into sin, he then affords another occasion for spiritual ruin. It is for this reason that it is called active scandal."

THE leading of another into sin (even though it be only indirectly) also involves a sin against the virtue against which someone causes his neighbor to offend. The reason for this is that every virtue forbids not merely every action contrary to itself, but it also forbids the placing of an occasion which would cause others to commit sin. For such an occasion, even though in itself it could not be said to be conducive to sin, is nevertheless the moral cause of one's neighbor falling into sin. I say that such indirect scandal is a *moral cause* of another's sin, for it equivalently induces another to commit it: without it the neighbor would not have sinned.

DON'T TAKE ROOT!

Many things are portable today. We have portable typewriters, sewing machines, radios, stoves and even houses, for that is what trailers really are. In one sense this is an indication of the restlessness and insecurity of people today but in another sense there is real spiritual value in being portable, for it always remains true that the Christian who is not unduly attached to things of the world will be ready to rise up and go when God gives marching orders.

Quote



BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Tobin, C.SS.R.

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in THE LIGUORIAN be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to THE LIGUORIAN for further information.

A Woman of Unity

Sister Mary Celine, S.A.

The Society of the Atonement at Graymoor is a religious community whose original members were Anglican Nuns and who entered the Church in a body. Father Paul is the founder of the religious community for men; Mother Lurana is the foundress of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement. An American girl, Lurana Mary White wanted to follow the religious life with the special Franciscan emphasis on poverty. Her quest led her from several Anglican communities to establish her own group and finally to enter the Church with her religious sisters. Her mission was to work with Father Paul of Graymoor for the restoration of unity in the Church.

Sister Mary Celine, a member of her religious community, has drawn together from many sources the facts of her life. Mother Lurana is one of the remarkable women in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.

(Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, \$4.50)

Soeur Angele and the Bell Ringer's Niece

Henri Catalan

This is the third murder mystery that features the sleuthing of Soeur Angele of the Daughters of Charity, a medical doctor with experience in legal medicine. The Bell Ringer is murdered while Sister Angele is at prayer; his niece has two visions. Sister Angele figures out the connection between these two events in a small French village. Entertaining reading but the plot is rather transparent and Sister Angele is no Father Brown, nor is Henri Catalan a G. K. Chesterton.

(Sheed and Ward, \$2.50)

The Wife of Pilate

Gertrude von Le Fort

Translated by Marie C. Buehrle

In a dream Claudia Procula hears the words of the Apostle's Creed, "suffered under Pontius Pilate," and these words change her life. Miss von Le Fort, the distinguished author of **Hymns to the Church** and **The Eternal Woman**, has written a sensitive and imaginative development of the few simple facts furnished in the Gospels. The slave girl narrates the entire story in a letter to a friend of Pilate's wife, a technique that brings unity and a very personal quality to the book. Gertrude von Le Fort is one of the best Catholic writers of our generation and at the age of eighty is still producing books of outstanding merit.

(Bruce, \$1.75)

Follow Christ

This is the eighteenth edition of the popular vocational guide book, **Follow Christ**. The 136 pages make this larger than its predecessors. It features very attractive articles on many different religious communities of men and women.. The art work helps to make this very appealing. Excellent for priests, nuns, parents and the young.

(Grail Publications, \$.75)

Canon Law

T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J.

Adam C. Ellis, S.J.

This is the third edition of the popular text and commentary on **Canon Law**. The 980 pages furnish a clear explanation of the various canons; and the new edition incorporates recent decisions of the Holy See and references to the current literature. There is a full treatise on secular institutes. An excellent text for the seminarian and practical reference book for the priest.

(Bruce, \$10.50)

The Beginnings of the English Reformation

Hugh Ross Williamson

Hugh Ross Williamson, grandson and son of Congregationalist ministers and an Anglican minister for twelve years until his reception into the Church in 1955, has written a short account of the early history of the English Reformation. His endeavor is to untangle the complicated web of events that led to the break and caused its continuation. A scholarly and well documented story that is highly readable.

(Sheed and Ward, \$2.50)

A Popular History of the Reformation Philip Hughes

Father Philip Hughes, now lecturer at Notre Dame University is an English priest who is recognized as one of the foremost historians of our day. He has several scholarly works on the Church and the Reformation, but the present book, as indicated in the title, is for the average reader. The six sections of this book indicate the scope: 1. The Traditional Catholic Religion; 2. The Reformers' Europe; 3. Revival and Restoration; 4. Luther and the First Protestants; 5. The English Reformation; 6. The Council of Trent: Calvin; 7. Trent, Queen Elizabeth, Knox. As a true historian, Father Hughes presents issues as they are and is not afraid to admit weakness and evils in the Catholic life of the times that helped to bring about the Reformation. Every thinking Catholic would do well to read this practical and popular account of one of the great crises in our civilization.

(Hanover House, \$4.00)

Out of the Sunset

Maura McGrath

The author has written a novel about the Irish families who homesteaded on the plains of Kansas and fought the hard battle against the soil and the droughts. The old Irish phrases and customs will delight the Irish reader. A simple tale, well told. Maura McGrath is a pseudonym for an Ursuline nun, a descendant of the early Kansas pioneers.

(Pageant Press, \$3.00)

Marriage and The Family

Alphonse H. Clemens

Dr. Alphonse H. Clemens, associate professor of sociology and director of the marriage counseling center at the Catholic University, intends this book to serve realistically the practical, functional needs of married life. To this end, its contents must deal with all the major influences on life itself — theology, philosophy, sociology, psychology, physiology, education, recreation, economics and law. The 353 pages do give a good positive outline for a happy marriage. The emphasis is upon the program for a successful marriage, and not so much stress is placed upon unhappy marriages except as object lessons. The matter is very basic and practical; the presentation is readily understandable. A book rather for the specialist, philosopher, sociologist, priest, marriage counsellor, than for the ordinary reader. But any reader who desires a basic understanding of marriage will find the material well within his grasp. An excellent addition to the growing Catholic literature on marriage.

(Prentice—Hall, \$6.00)

Don Camillo Takes the Devil by the Tail

Giovanni Guareschi

It is always a pleasure to welcome another series of encounters between the human Don Camillo and his Communist adversaries in the small Italian village. This book reports more incidents between the priest and Peppone, the Communist mayor. Don Camillo has his problems and sometimes finds an unexpected ally in Peppone who also has difficulties in keeping up with the changing party line. Humorous incidents that will entertain and also give a glimpse of some aspects of Communism in Catholic Italy.

(Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, \$3.00)

The Book of Catholic Authors

Walter Romig, Editor

This is the fifth volume in the series of autobiographical informal self-portraits of famous modern Catholic writers. This issue contains, among others, autobiographical sketches of Louis de Wohl, John Farrow, Eric Gill, Hilda Graef, Lucile Hasley, Frances P. Keyes, Kathryn Hulme and Pius Parsch. An informative book for the reader, a necessary work for the Catholic library.

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of his work in the Catholic reference field it is only fitting to salute Walter Romig. He is responsible for **The American Catholic Who's Who**, **The Guide to Catholic Literature** (reviews of current books) as well as **The Book of Catholic Authors**. He has served well the cause of Catholic publishing and the Liguorian wishes him many more years of service.

(Walter Romig, \$3.30
979 Lakepointe Ave.
Grosse Pointe 30, Mich.)

IMAGE BOOKS

Viper's Tangle (.75)

Francois Mauriac

A reprint of the profound soul study of a proud and avaricious man at odds with his family. An excellent Catholic novel that comes to grips with real evil.

The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux (.65)

A new translation of the spiritual classic. The Little Flower still has much to offer the modern world in her doctrine of the little way of childlike trust in God.

My Life for My Sheep (.90)

Alfred Duggan

Well-written biography of St. Thomas A Becket. Book has been highly praised by the secular press.

A Gilson Reader (.95)

Anton C. Pegis

Selections from the writings of Etienne Gilson made by a well-known philosopher who studied under him and was later a teaching associate. A good introduction to the work of one of the foremost Catholic philosophers of our day.

Helena (.65)

Evelyn Waugh

Reprint of the historical novel about St. Helena, the discoverer of the True Cross. Well written in the accepted Waugh manner.

The Manner is Ordinary (.95)

John LaFarge, S.J.

Complete and unabridged autobiography of the well-known Jesuit, Father John LaFarge. Charming scenes from his boyhood spent in contact with people whose homes figure in our history; the story of his busy priestly life as parish priest, editor, author and promoter of interracial justice.

The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World (\$1.25)

Edited by Terence P. McLaughlin, C.S.B.

This is a collection of eleven social encyclicals of Pius XI: Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ, Kingship of Christ, Christian Education, Christian Marriage, Catholic Priesthood, Reconstructing the Social Order, Present Distress of the Human Race, Apostolate of the Laity, On the Church in Germany, Atheistic Communism and the Religious Situation in Mexico. Father Terence McLaughlin has furnished a general introduction, special analysis of each encyclical plus an index that makes this book not only a book to be read, but also an excellent reference work.

HEADLINERS

(Number in parenthesis refers to classification according to rating used in general list.)

Peyton Place (IV)—Metalious

Letter from Peking (IIa)—Buck

On the Beach (IIa)—Shute

The World of Suzie Wong (III)—
Mason

Compulsion (III)—Levin

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Rally Round the Flag Boys (III)—
Shulman

The Pink Hotel (IIb)—Erskine &
Dennis

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The Durable Fire (IIb)—Swiggett

BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

I. Suitable for general reading:

Baruch: My Own Story—*Baruch*
 Soeur Angele and the Bell Ringer's
 Niece—*Catalan*
 Song of the River—*Clark*
 Man-Eaters of India—*Corbett*
 Contemporary American Usage—
Evans, Bergen & Cornelia
 Any Number Can Play—*Fadiman*
 The Man Who Presumed—*Farwell*
 Princes of Monaco—*Gaither*
 Practice to Deceive—*Lockridge*
 The Battle of Cassino—*Majdalany*
 The Birth of a Grandfather—*Sarton*
 The Lovely Day—*Smith*
 A View from the Hill—*Sumner*
 Buckskin and Blanket Days—*Tibbles*
 Sandy Was a Soldier's Boy—*Walker*

II. Suitable only for adults:

A. Because of advanced style and contents:

The Running Man—*Benson*
 Testament of Experience—*Brittain*
 Bay of the Damned—*Carrier*
 Vanguard to Venus—*Castle*
 Best Detective Stories of the Year—
Cooke
 Climb the Wall—*Cronin*
 The Future of Socialism—*Crosland*
 Louise—*Dering*
 Come with Me to Macedonia—
Drohan
 Russia Revisited—*Fischer*
 The Red Book of the Persecuted
 Church—*Galter*
 The Hungarian Revolution—*Lasky*
 To an Unknown Lady—*Mauoris*
 The Tichbourne Imposter—*MacGregor*

The Healing Power of Faith—
Oursler

The Moon by Night—*Packer*

Police Reporter—*Prager*

Tip on a Dead Jockey—*Shaw*

The Comforters—*Spark*

Promises: Poems 1954-56—*Warren*

Voss—*White*

Enigmas of History—*Williamson*

The Soviet Secret Police—*Wolin &
 Slusser*

The Tichbourne Claimant—*Woodruff*

B. Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:

Drive—*Codman*

The Poisoned Crown—*Druon*

Without Love—*Hanley*

Justine—*Durrell*

The Pink Hotel—*Erskine & Dennis*

The End of Pity—*Macauley*

Pity the Innocent—*Mannin*

The Inevitable Hour—*Marshall*

Lines of Life—*Mauriac*

The Butterfly Net—*Sheldon*

A Use of Riches—*Stewart*

Sojourn of a Stranger—*Sullivan*

III. Permissible for the discriminat- ing adult:

In the Time of Greenbloom—
Fielding

The Southerner—*Eiker*

IV. Not recommended to any reader:

From Russia, with Love—*Fleming*

Remember Me to God—*Kaufmann*

On the Road—*Kerouac*

Behind These Walls—*Teale*

LUCID \ / INTERVALS

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

A sad looking character was ushered into the office of a prominent psychiatrist.

"I've lost all desire to go on, doctor," he said. "Life has got me down."

"Yes," said the doctor sympathetically. "I understand. We all have our problems. You'll need a year or two of treatments at \$50 a week."

There was a pause.

"Well," said the patient finally, "that solves your problem, doc. Now what about mine?"

A coroner tells of a death certificate which reached him. In the column reserved for "cause of death," the doctor had signed his own name.

The coroner returned the certificate with a note:

"This may be true, but don't you think we had better have some scientific reason as well?"

Hotel clerk: "Here's your hometown paper, sir."

Travelling salesman: "Thanks. I'll just scan the obituary column. Great Scott! Here's a notice of my own death!"

Hurrying to a phone, he called his wife.

"Darling," he said, "Have you seen the notice of my death in the paper?"

Wife: "Yes, sweetheart. But what I am anxious to know is where are you calling from."



KEEP SMILING

It makes everyone wonder what you've been up to.

December, 1957

DESPERATE REMEDY

Dan Bennett, in the American Legion Monthly, tells the story of an elderly native of a rural section who throughout his life had never gone to church and never taken any interest in religious matters. In due course he was confined to his bed with a serious illness. The doctor came, looked him over, and informed the old gentleman that he was a mighty sick man. After a moment of reflection, the old native said:

"Tell me, doc, what do you think of this here death-bed repentance?"

"Well, I don't know," said the doctor cautiously, "but it's probably better than nothing."

"Well," replied the old man, "if I ain't feelin' better tomorrow, durned if I don't try it."

VERSE AND WORSE

When Dad plugs in the Christmas tree

We children raise a joyful shout

No sooner is the contact made
Than all the lights in the house go out.

To us it is no longer news
That what we need is a bigger fuse.



"Well, that's the life," said the egg on the monastery table. "Out of the frying pan into the friar."

—American Weekly

MEMO TO WORSHIPPERS

Don't leave your purse in church. Someone may think it is a direct answer to prayer.

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MAKE UP YOUR MIND!

You have to make up your mind as to what you want out of life. Do you want the quick, poisonous satisfaction of giving in to each feeling and emotion as they arise in your life, or have you a long-range policy? And do you have an ideal, so that when some unruly feeling gets in the way of that ideal, you lop off its head? Sometimes we find an artist, a painter, who is so desirous to put his idea onto canvas that he will ignore any desire for sleep or food. Well, that's it. Feelings and emotions may be fun, but we have to get so bent on eternal fun with God and His saints, that we are willing to slash away at any feeling or emotion that gets in our way on the road to heaven.

For a bit of practice, eat your next meal, not because you feel like it, but because God has a job for you to do on your way to heaven, and you need strength to do it. Thus you are eating because it is the will of God for you to eat. You are one jump ahead of the plain, animal feeling of being hungry. Don't take all the beauty and merit out of your life by making your work for God wait upon your feelings. Don't wait until you feel like forgiving that person, until you feel like getting up and going to holy Mass on a week-day, until you feel like denying yourself the best in food, the best in clothing, the best in entertainment. Because—you may never feel like it, any more than Mary would ever feel like standing beneath the cross that day and watching her Son be murdered. Christ could not wait until she felt like it, and Mary would not wait. And He can't wait for you. . . .

ONLY A LITTLE BIT ANIMAL

Yes, there is an animal side to our nature, and out of it arise the feelings, the hates, the fears, the blind desires, the seething emotions. Shall they render us complete animals, crowding us into dark corrals of existence without beauty, without the touch of God, without the touch of hope?

Or shall we trample on these feelings, as we unfurl the banners of truth and faith, and marshal the powers of our will behind them? After all, we are only a little bit animal. Down deep we are the image of God, made after His own likeness. Heaven, not a cattle-pen, is our home, and the home of our Father. Our destiny is eternal, and our heritage is happiness without end.

Amongst Ourselves

AS IS our custom, we send out the December issue of THE LIGUORIAN as the messenger carrying our Christmas wishes and greetings to all our subscribers and readers.

God bless you all and grant you the peace of soul promised by the angels at Bethlehem! That is our Christmas wish and prayer for you.

There is still time for the sending in of new subscriptions as Christmas gifts for friends. While the special supply of December copies is available, we shall send that issue as the first installment of a Christmas present that will last for a whole year to every person to whom THE LIGUORIAN is given as a Christmas gift by a relative or friend.

Perhaps you know someone who has shown interest in the Catholic Church, or who has asked you sincere questions about the Catholic religion. We suggest strongly that you give a Christmas gift subscription to these persons. You may, by that little act of thoughtfulness, do some genuine missionary work by helping such people find the peace, the strength and the guidance they are seeking.

★ ★ ★

Giving THE LIGUORIAN as a Christmas gift is a means of saying to friends many of the things that everyone would like to say but cannot say except through a gift like THE LIGUORIAN.

WE shall send a gift card, with Christmas greetings, signed as you direct, to the persons to whom you give a gift subscription.

The special rates for Christmas gifts are listed on the back cover of this issue, together with an order blank for your convenience.

Since this will be the issue of THE LIGUORIAN which thousands of people will receive as their first copy, we take this opportunity to restate our policy. The whole purpose of THE LIGUORIAN is to make Christ known, in His person, in His teaching, in His redemption, in His Church, in His promises of peace on earth and happiness in heaven. Christ is everything that anybody needs for security and happiness, but He is nothing to anybody who does not know Him. It is our purpose and plan to make it possible for anyone who reads THE LIGUORIAN to know Christ and His will and to be irresistibly attracted to all the wonderful things He came to offer to the world.

★ ★ ★

If You Like It, Others Will Too!

Your hundreds of letters to us, telling us of the inspiration and enlightenment THE LIGUORIAN brings you, make us feel that you will want to share your joy with others.

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